

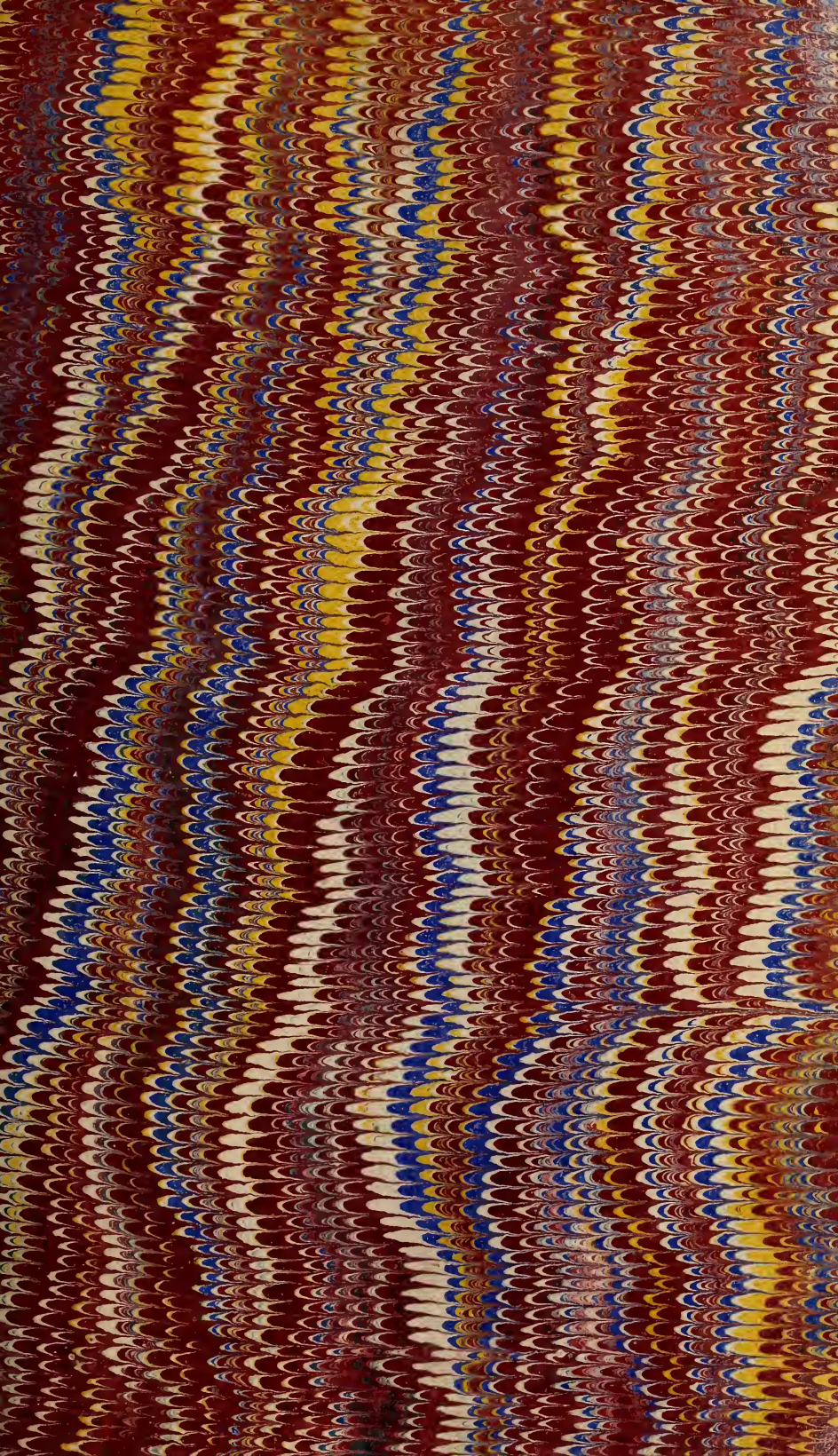
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

FORCE COLLECTION.]

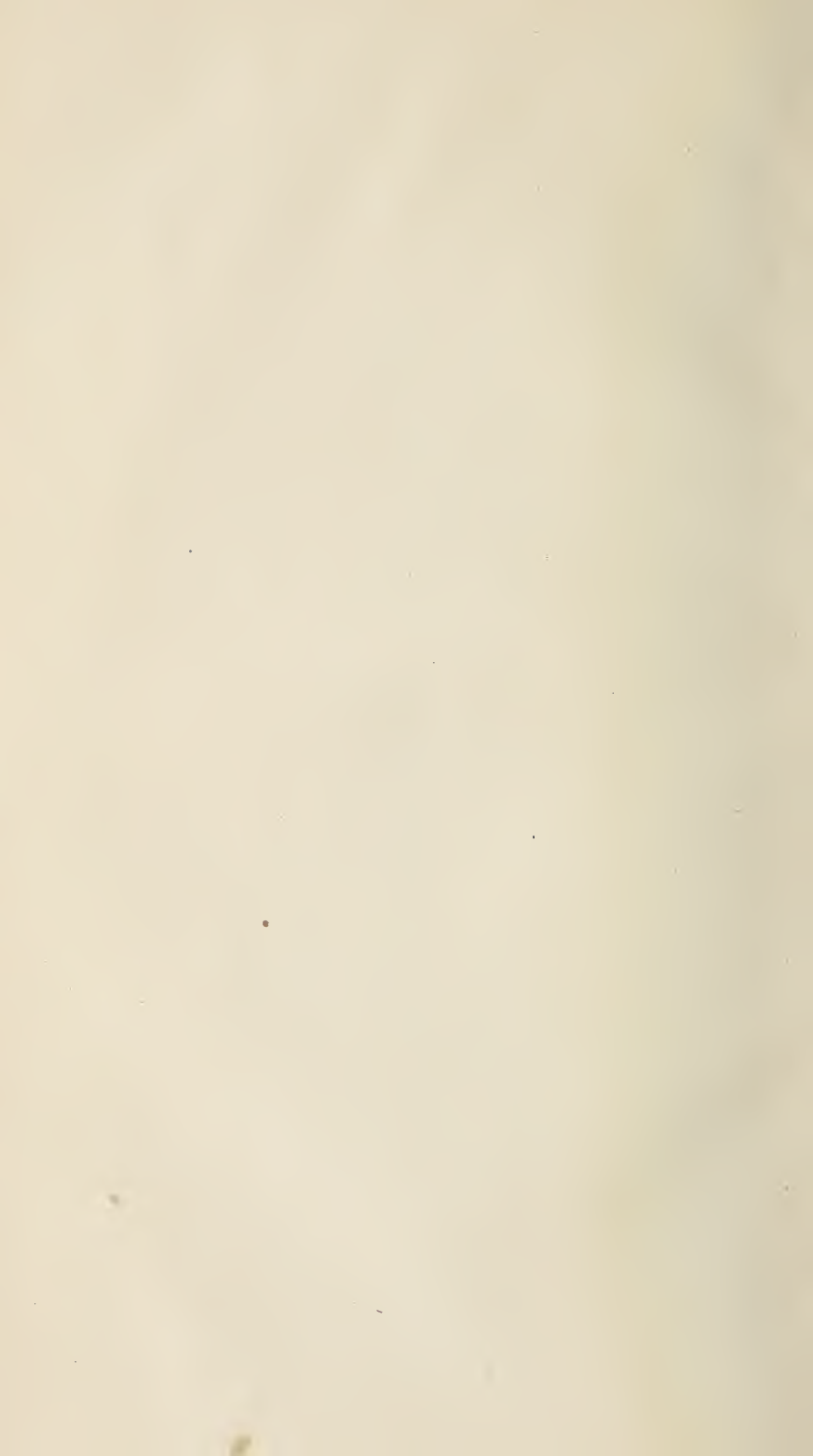
Chap. BX 9847

Shelf - W72

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.







4

A

REPLY

TO

DR WARE'S LETTERS

TO

TRINITARIANS AND CALVINISTS

BY LEONARD WOODS, D. D.

ABBOT PROF. OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN THEOL. SEM., ANDOVER.



ANDOVER

PUBLISHED BY FLAGG AND GOULD.

1821.

of

BX9847
.W72

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION, p. 4—9.

CHAPTER I. 9—41.

Dr. Ware's opinions and reasoning with respect to the human character, examined.—Man's character judged by a wrong standard, 12.—Basis of Dr. Ware's reasoning, 13.—His first argument, from the characteristics of early life, examined, 18.—Second, from the interest taken in children, 26.—Third, from the repulsiveness of the doctrine of depravity, 27.—Fourth, from the commands, precepts, &c. 29.—Fifth, from representations of Scripture, 34.

CHAPTER II. 41—47.

Result of observation and experience, as to original depravity.

CHAPTER III. 47—61.

Human depravity *native*.—Examples of the proper use of words and phrases employed in stating this doctrine, 48.—Whether the words *natural*, *native*, &c. are applicable to human depravity, 51.—Depravity found in all men of every generation, 52.—Appears early, 52.—Cannot be traced to any change, subsequently to man's birth, 53.—Operates spontaneously, 57.—Hard to be eradicated, 58.—An infant will certainly be a sinner, 58.—Argument from Scripture referred to, 60.—Summary, 61.

CHAPTER IV. 62—85.

Objections to depravity, 62.—Unitarian mode of reasoning unphilosophical, 62.—Proper mode of reasoning, 65.—Moral depravity not inconsistent with the divine perfections, 78—85.

CHAPTER V. 85—113.

Native depravity not inconsistent with moral agency.—What constitutes moral agency, 86.—Men sinners as soon as moral agents, 87.—Difficulties attending Dr. Ware's theory, 90.—No more inconsistent to suppose man inclined to sin at first, than afterwards,

100.—Man culpable for defects of character, however acquired,
 100.—Difficulties attend both theories.—Influence of bad example
 108.—How far the *circumstances* of Adam's sin invalidates the argument of the Orthodox, 110.

CHAPTER VI. 113—128.

Manner in which Dr. Ware confutes scripture arguments.—Argument from Gen. vi. p. 113.—Principle involved in Dr. Ware's reasoning, and its consequences, 116.—The Bible accounts for it, that some are holy, while the generality are sinful, 126.—The worst men selected as specimens of human nature, 127.

CHAPTER VII. 128—140.

Dr. Ware's reply to the argument from John iii. 3; Rom. v. 12; and Ephes. ii. 3.

CHAPTER VIII. 140—149.

The doctrine of man's native depravity of great practical importance.

CHAPTER IX. 149—198.

On the doctrine of election.—Uncandid representation of the doctrine, 150.—Proper view of it, 151.—The controversy respects the divine administration, 155.—Mistakes corrected, 156.—Objections considered, 158.—No injustice in distinguishing grace, 159.—Dr. Ware's theory attended with as great difficulties as the Orthodox, 164.—Fact confirms the doctrine, 169.—The divine purpose ensures the influence of motives, 171.—Makes men moral agents, 173.—Extracts from Wesley, 174.—Difficulties attending the denial of the doctrine, 175.—Argument from John xvii. p. 176.—Ephes. i. 3—11. p. 182.—The supposition that *communities* only are elected, 183.—Rom. ix. p. 193.

CHAPTER X. 198—216.

Atonement.—Doctrine of redemption, as held by Dr. Ware, 198.—Five objections to his scheme, 199—208.—Remarks on figurative language, &c. 209.

CHAPTER XI. 216—228.

Dr. Ware's objections to Divine influence, considered, 216—220.—Moral influence of the two systems compared, 220.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN I wrote the Letters to Unitarians, I meant to treat the subjects of the present controversy so explicitly, and to extend my remarks to such a length, that I might, in any case, have a full apology for declining a rejoinder. I then had, and have still many and weighty reasons against being a party in any religious controversy. In the first place, it is not the way in which I have generally supposed I could best labour for the promotion of the cause of Christ. The duties imposed upon me by my office are sufficiently extensive and important, to occupy all my time and my powers of action; sufficiently diversified, abundantly to satisfy my love of variety; and so congenial to my inclinations, as to afford all the enjoyment which can be expected by any man, oppressed with the cares of public life and the imperfections of human nature. But for my reluctance to engage in controversy, I have had another reason. In the regular course of my official duty, though I have much to do with all the controverted subjects of religion, and though I never impose any restraints upon the freedom of discussion, but those of decency; it has still cost me no effort, to keep my mind free from agitation. But as to public religious controversy, I have observed its unhappy influence upon so many men of distinguished excellence; I have seen that it has so often marred the best natural temper; that it has so often occasioned the offensive boast of victory, or that which is no less offensive, the sullen mortification of defeat; that

it has so often injured the beauty of men's characters, cooled the ardour of their piety, and detracted much from their comfort, or at least from the comfort of their friends, that I have earnestly wished to avoid the danger. I have wished also, if possible, to avoid the sufferings of controversy; the unhappiness of being exposed to the charge of bigotry or party spirit, of ambition or meanness, of arrogance or imbecility; the unhappiness of being reproached or despised by my opposers, or the greater unhappiness of feeling any disposition to reproach or despise them. Besides, I have thought, that, at least so far as I was concerned, truth and piety might be more successfully promoted by more silent, gentle means. I have feared that an attempt even to advance the cause of pure religion, in a controversial way, would kindle a fire which would endanger the most precious interests of the church, and which Christians, possessing the strongest attachment to Christ, and blessed with the largest portion of his spirit, might in vain try to extinguish.

These and other like considerations may seem trifling to men on both sides, who cherish a disputatious spirit, who pant for the noise and strife of controversy, and who have never soberly considered the evils likely to result from it. But in my mind, such considerations, as I have suggested, are of no ordinary importance; and for a long time they produced in me a resolution against controversy, which, till of late, I thought could never be overcome. But as it is, I must now go forward, hoping to derive benefit to myself from the kind and amiable temper of my opponent, and no less benefit to my cause, from the frankness with which he declares his opinions, and the zeal with which he attacks mine.

I do not come to this task with an expectation of producing, generally, any material change in the views of confirmed Unitarians. I should be a poor proficient in the science of the human mind, could I not foresee, that my arguments will be likely to appear as inconclusive to them, as theirs do to me. My age and experience have somewhat cooled the ardour of feeling, which might once have led me to indulge different expectations, and to think that my opponents and all others might easily be convinced of the truth of my opinions. I have lived long enough to learn, that arguments have a different weight in the judgment of different men, and that something besides argument is concerned in controversy. In the present case, the facts, which are the principles of reasoning, are different; just as might be the case with two philosophers, who, making use of instruments not agreeing together, or using the same instruments in very different ways, might come to a different judgment respecting the phenomena of light, or any other material substance; in consequence of which, both of them might reason correctly on the ground of what they had discovered to be the properties of that substance, and yet be conducted to different and opposite conclusions. In the controversy respecting depravity, the facts, which are admitted by the two parties, as the foundations of their respective systems, are not the same; nor is the method of ascertaining what facts really exist, the same. Now it is very natural for us to suppose, that the habits of thinking, and feeling, and judging, which have led men to embrace the Unitarian creed in regard to this subject, will give them but a poor opinion of our arguments. If we were exactly in their case, we presume our judgment would be like theirs. Did not our own experience,—did not a faithful comparison of our heart and

life with the rule of duty, fully convince us of the fact, that our own nature is the subject of an original, deep-rooted corruption; no external evidence could easily induce us to believe the fact in relation to others.

It may be asked then, what good I hope to accomplish by pursuing this controversy? One good purpose, perhaps the principal one, which I hope to effect, is, to satisfy the serious friends of orthodoxy, that, after all the attacks which have been made upon their religion, it rests on an immoveable basis; that it has as much solid argument to support it, as they have ever supposed. I hope also to convince those who, not being yet settled in their belief, are candidly inquiring, *what is truth*, that the system of orthodoxy, at least in its principal features, so far corresponds with the word of God, and with sound experience, and that its moral tendency is in so high a degree salutary, that they ought to make many a serious pause, before they reject it. And finally, I should be glad to do something towards convincing candid Unitarians of that, which has indeed always been sufficiently proved, that those who embrace the scheme of orthodoxy, do not necessarily resign all claims to manly strength of understanding, nor show themselves enemies to freedom and fairness of investigation.

There are many passages, of a taking plausibility, in Dr. Ware's Letters, against which a charge of incorrectness might easily be sustained, but which, as they relate to matters of small consequence in the controversy, I shall pass over with little or no attention. I say this to guard my readers against supposing, that my silence on any part of the Letters is to be interpreted as a sign of approbation. My purpose is to fix on the main points of the controversy, and to dwell upon those arguments, on which all who will bring themselves to patient

and thorough inquiry, must lay the greatest stress. If we can defend the general principles which have governed our reasoning ; if we can, by legitimate arguments, support the chief doctrines of our system, and vindicate them from the chief objections of opposers, the work is done. Let the strength of the foundation be made to appear, and we shall not doubt the building will stand. And as to the scheme which we feel it to be our duty to oppose,—if we can succeed in taking away its foundation, we shall deem it sufficient, without either making a violent attack upon the superstructure to hasten its fall, or standing by to exult in its ruins.

CHAPTER I.

TO PREPARE the way for an useful investigation of the subject of human depravity, I shall present in one connected view the opinions which Dr. Ware has advanced in different parts of his third Letter.

“I insist,” he says, “that the account usually given of human wickedness is exaggerated.”—“Men are not the mere brutes and fiends it would make them. There is much good as well as evil in the human character;” (meaning the natural character.) “As much as there is of wickedness and vice, there is far more of virtue and goodness.”—“If we take a fair and full view, we shall find that in by far the greatest part of human beings, the just, and kind, and benevolent dispositions prevail beyond measure over the opposite ; and that even in the worst men, good feelings and principles are predominant, and they probably perform in the course of their lives many more good than bad actions ; as the greatest liar does, by the constitution of his nature, doubtless speak many

truths to every lie he utters.”—“ Man is by nature—or as he is born into the world, innocent and pure ; free from all moral corruption, as well as destitute of all positive holiness ; and until he has formed a character either good or bad, an object of the divine complacency and favour.”—“ He is by nature no more inclined to vice than to virtue.”—“ In early life, we see no proofs of depravity, of malignity, of inclination to evil in preference to good.”—“ What I have stated I am persuaded is the general character, until the disposition and tendency of nature has been changed by education, example, and circumstances.”—“ I know not a single mark of early depravity common to children in general, which may not be fairly traced to causes which imply no degree of depravity, and no fault of character or disposition.”—“ No man, I am persuaded, was ever led by personal observation and experience to the thought of an original depravity of human nature.”—“ Young children,” (he means in their natural state,) “ are what men are to become by regeneration.”—“ Those now born into the world in christian lands, are, as the Ephesians were after their conversion to Christianity, *saved by the grace of God, quickened, raised from the dead, made nigh by the blood of Christ, fellow citizens with the saints, of the household of God.*”—“ All this language was applied to the Ephesians universally after their conversion, and all of it is as applicable universally now to those who are Christians by birth, as distinguished from those who are heathen by birth.”

The scheme more briefly is this. Man is born into the world free from corruption of nature, or propensity to evil. We see no proofs of depravity in childhood, no proofs of inclination to evil rather than good. All who are now born into the world in Christian

lands are saints, saved by grace, as the converted Ephesians were. Every mark of depravity common to children may be traced to causes which imply no depravity at all. Even in the worst of men good feelings and principles are predominant.

It may be useless for me to stop here to express the astonishment that good men must generally feel, at such a description of the human character. For myself, while I have the Bible, and my own heart, and the world before my eyes, it is as impossible for me to admit the truth of the system above stated, as the truth of a system of philosophy which denies the principle of gravitation ; and for the same reason.

Dr. Ware says he is persuaded, that "no man was ever led by personal observation or experience to the thought of an original depravity of human nature." I have no doubt he has such a persuasion ; but it is a little remarkable that he should have it, when by conversing either with authors, or with living Christians, he might so easily have discovered its contrariety to fact. Thousands and millions of enlightened Christians have declared, and multitudes of them in writing, that personal observation and experience have led them to believe in the moral depravation of man, or in his native propensity to evil. They have said it when they have had no motive to say it, but the strength of their own conviction. They have said it in their most solemn devotions ; and they have said it most frequently, and felt it most deeply, when *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has shone in their hearts* with the greatest clearness. And I will add what has been remarked by many writers, that those who have most carefully studied human nature, even among pagans, have acknowledged, and that in very strong terms, an inward

depravation and corruption of man, rendering the mind averse to good and inclining it to evil.

In reflecting on this subject, I am led to inquire how it can be accounted for, that any man of sober judgment should entertain such views respecting the human character. Now so far as reasoning is concerned, I am satisfied, that the principal error in the scheme of Unitarians and Pelagians generally, lies in this, that *they judge of man's character by a wrong standard*. This controversy respects man, not as an animal or intellectual being, nor as a member of domestic or civil society, but as a subject of God's moral government. Viewed in this light, he is required to conform to the *moral law*. This is the only rule of duty, the only standard of right feeling and right action. If we would know whether any subject of God's moral government is holy or sinful, or in what degree he is so, we must compare his moral character with the divine law. So far as he is conformed to that law, he is holy. So far as he is not conformed, he is sinful. And as we are taught, that love to God and love to man is the sum of what the law requires; it is perfectly safe, and often very convenient in our reasoning, to make use of this summary of the law, as standing for the whole. This then being our rule of judgment, what will be our conclusion respecting the moral character exhibited by human beings in early life? Let the inquiry relate to the first character they exhibit, *as moral agents*; so that we may not unnecessarily perplex the subject, at the outset, by looking after the moral affections or actions of men, either before they are moral agents, or before the divine commands can be applied to them. Is it the general character of men, that, as soon as the divine law is declared to them, they are disposed cordially to obey it? We will not so shape

the inquiry, that it shall relate merely to exemption from sin. The real question is, whether holy love to God and man is the first moral affection which human beings generally exercise, after they become moral agents and are expressly informed what God requires of them. Keeping this point distinctly in view, let us now proceed to examine

The reasoning by which Dr. Ware supports his opinion respecting the human character.

The reasoning of Dr. Ware on this subject is indeed plausible, being founded upon those natural qualities of the youthful mind, which are honoured with the names of virtue, and universally regarded as amiable and useful. He says, "innocence, simplicity, and purity are the characteristics of early life."—"Veracity, kindness, goodwill, flow from the natural feelings."—"How early does the infant discover affection, attachment, gratitude to those from whom it receives kindness." These are charming names, and I am very sensible that charming qualities of human nature are denoted by them. And charming too are the complexion and features of a beautiful child, the sprightliness of its temper, and the activity of its limbs. But do any or all of these constitute *conformity to the moral law*? Do they render a child *holy*?

But Dr. Ware, with a view to consistency, will probably say, he does not mention the lovely qualities which are characteristic of early life, as a proof of *moral virtue*, or *holiness*, because the infant child has not yet actually formed a character, either good or bad, and so is neither holy nor unholy. But although this would have an appearance of consistency in one respect, it would, in another respect, involve the writer in a great inconsistency. For if this is his meaning, how is it possible to

make his remarks, p. 26, apposite to his subject? His subject is man's *moral character*. He had just before been charging the Orthodox with giving an exaggerated description of *human nature*, inasmuch as they do not take proper notice of what is "virtuous, and kind, and amiable, and good;"—words all denoting moral qualities. After thus distinctly bringing forward his subject, that is, human nature in respect to its moral qualities, he says, "our most correct ideas of human nature will be drawn from the characteristics of infancy, and the earliest indications of disposition, tendency, and *character* in the infant mind." Forgetting what he ventures to say in other places, that men by their natural birth receive no moral character, and have none, before they are born again, he here speaks of the indications of *character* in the infant mind.

Let us give this language a fair examination, and see whether any sense whatever that can be put upon it, will make the writer who uses it consistent with himself.—When he speaks of the indications of *character* in the infant mind, I ask what character is meant? Is it the character which belongs to man, as a moral agent, or in relation to a moral law? Then it would seem the infant mind has such a character, and that character must be either good or bad, holy or unholy; which would be contrary to Dr. Ware's statements, p. 20, 41, and elsewhere. But if he does not mean the moral character of man, or his character as a moral agent; then his observations, p. 26, do not relate at all to the subject of controversy. For the only point at issue is, what is man's nature or character, as a moral agent, and in relation to a moral law? I ask then again, has the infant really a character in this respect? If so, that character must be either holy or unholy; and then

what becomes of Dr. Ware's favourite position, that infants are both free from moral corruption and destitute of holiness, and that they have no moral character, either good or bad, before they are born again? On the other hand, if it is a fact, as he maintains, that infants have no moral character; then the characteristics of infancy which he enumerates, p. 26, can nowise relate to moral character, i. e. they can nowise relate to the subject under consideration; and so far as this subject is concerned, he might just as well mention a fair complexion or beautiful countenance, as "innocence, simplicity, and purity."

It may, however, be said, that "the characteristics of infancy, and the earliest indications of disposition, tendency, and *character* in the infant mind," though the infant mind does not yet possess a *moral* character, may still help us in some other way, to "*correct* ideas of human nature." Dr. Ware will not say that these characteristics of infancy prove the nature of man to be holy by proving that holiness really belongs to the infant's mind; for, as remarked before, this would be contrary to one of his main points. How then does his reasoning stand? Does he mean to say, that those things, which are characteristics of human nature at a period when moral character does not exist, that is, that those properties of infancy which cannot be indications of any moral character *at the time*, are true indications of that moral character which subsequently exists? But this again would involve his reasoning in difficulty, because, according to his views, mankind after becoming moral agents, are not thus innocent, and pure, and free from inclination to sin.

But as I wish to do full justice to my opponent, and as far possible to give to his words the very sense which he meant to express, I must say, that his language and

his reasoning plainly imply, that human beings, at that period of infancy to which he refers, *do really possess a moral character*. What he has written in different places, taken together, evidently show that this is his opinion. He says, p. 26, "we draw our most correct ideas of *human nature* from the characteristics of *infancy*, and from the earliest indications of *disposition*, tendency, and *character* in the infant mind." Among these characteristics of infancy, he mentions "innocence, simplicity, and purity;" which he doubtless means we should understand to be moral qualities. And a little below, after speaking of an infant as an object of interest to those about it, he asks, "Would it be so if it appeared to possess nothing good, and no tendency to good?" evidently implying that it does possess something good. In another place, he represents men as becoming "reasonable, *accountable* beings, by their natural birth." If they are accountable beings, they are moral agents, and must have moral dispositions. He says too, still more plainly, p. 31, that young children have a "good disposition;" "that they are what men become by regeneration;" that they "are objects of the Saviour's complacency," and "proper objects of imitation." From these very plain, unequivocal declarations of Dr. Ware I cannot but infer what his real opinion is, namely, that by their natural birth men become moral, accountable beings, and have a moral disposition or character which is good; good or holy in such a sense, as to entitle them to the Saviour's complacency, and make them heirs of his kingdom. I am compelled to think this is the position he would maintain, though in several places he seems to slide away to another side of his system, and asserts that men by nature have no moral character, and are equally distant from holiness and from sin, and

equally without any natural tendency to one or the other.

Before proceeding to a direct examination of Dr. Ware's arguments in support of his opinion respecting human nature, I will make one remark. If my position, that men are by their birth *morally corrupt* is thought to be absurd, on account of their being incapable, at first, of possessing any character, good or bad; the position of Dr. Ware is in this respect equally absurd. For if men, as they come into the world,—if infants, are capable of being "*pure*," they are capable of being *impure*. If they are capable of having a good disposition, or "tendency to good," they are capable of a bad disposition, or a tendency to evil. If they are capable of such a character as will render them "objects of divine complacency," they are equally capable of such a character as will render them objects of divine displeasure. It is Dr. Ware's opinion, p. 21, that man is by nature as capable of vice as of virtue. I should hope therefore that neither he, nor any one who embraces his opinions, will ever again allege the *incapacity* of infants to be the subjects of moral corruption, as an objection against the doctrine of native depravity.

When I say that many plain and unequivocal declarations of Dr. Ware and the general current of his reasoning prove that he believes man by nature the subject of real virtue or holiness, I would not willingly oblige myself to show, that he has nowhere written any thing contrary to this. For in commenting on John iii. 3, 6, he does indeed represent that "men receive by their natural birth only human nature; that they receive no moral character, but only the faculties and powers in the exercise of which a moral character is to be formed; and that the formation of a moral character, (he

does not say whether good or bad,) introduces them into a new state of being, and may be called a new birth; and in p. 42, he seems to think the implication of the passage is, "that men do not possess by birth that character of personal holiness, which is necessary to their being Christians." It may be easier for Dr. Ware, than for me, to reconcile these representations with the passages to which I have before referred.

Let us now see, by what particular arguments he supports the opinion, that men are by nature not only free from moral corruption, but inclined to virtue.

He first argues from *the innocence, simplicity, and purity of early life, and from the veracity, kindness, good-will, attachment and gratitude, which flow from the natural feelings of children.*

To guard against being imposed upon by names, let us here inquire what is that innocence, simplicity, purity, &c. which are in reality characteristic of the infant mind?

The word *innocence*, when applied to men in regard to moral character, signifies freedom from moral defilement, or guilt. But when applied to other things, it commonly denotes that they are harmless, or free from a tendency to do hurt. In this sense a dove and a lamb are said to be innocent. If I mistake not, this is generally the meaning of the word, when applied to infant children. It is in regard to this kind of innocence, that they are so often compared to lambs and doves.

Simplicity, when applied to rational beings, properly signifies artlessness, freedom from cunning or deceit. Infants and young children may have simplicity in this sense, merely because they are incapable of subtilty or cunning, or because they have had no temptation to learn any deceitful arts.

In what sense Dr. Ware uses the word *purity* it is

not easy for me to determine. If he uses it in that high moral sense, in which our Saviour uses it when he says, "blessed are the pure in heart," and so means to assert as a general truth, that moral purity or holiness is a characteristic of early life; I would not repeat in my reply what has already been suggested, as to the contrariety of this to other representations in his Letters; but would direct the reader's attention a moment to the shape which his reasoning assumes.

He undertakes to prove the truth of a disputed doctrine respecting human nature; i. e. that man is not the subject of innate corruption; and as a proof of this, he urges the purity which characterizes early life. Now if he uses the word *purity* as synonymous with *holiness*, he is chargeable with begging the question. But if he uses the word in an inferior sense, not including moral purity or holiness; then how can it prove that man is not morally depraved? But it may be he uses the word merely to denote freedom from particular forms of vice which show themselves in the world; or he may use it comparatively, and mean only that children are not yet tainted with those gross iniquities to which they are afterwards exposed. To either of these views of the subject we should fully agree.

And what are we to suppose Dr. Ware means by *the attachment, the kindness, the gratitude*, which show themselves in little children? Does he mean any thing which has the nature of moral virtue or holiness? If so, his reasoning is faulty in the same way as before. But if he does not consider the attachment and gratitude, which are characteristics of infancy, and which, according to several passages in his Letters, precede the formation of any moral character, as having a moral nature; then I think he must regard them much in the same

light, as he would those natural instincts, appetites and passions, the existence and exercise of which are not at all connected with moral character, and imply neither holiness nor sin.

We see now how the argument stands, and are prepared to examine how forcible and conclusive it is. The abovementioned characteristics of the infant mind are insisted upon, as a proof, and a most important proof, that man is by nature free from moral depravity. I maintain, that they do not prove it.

I say, first, what several passages in Dr. Ware's Letters will bear me out in saying, that none of "the characteristics of infancy," none of those things which "flow from the natural feelings," can, in reality, be of the nature of moral virtue, and so none of them can make known the moral disposition or character of the mind, as the fruit makes known the tree. Take the innocence, the attachment, the gratitude, and other obvious characteristics of little children, just as they are. What do they prove, as to moral character? Nothing. They neither prove the existence of holiness, nor freedom from sin. If you would have conclusive evidence of this, look at the numberless instances, in which characteristics of the same nature, and often higher in degree, are found actually to exist in those, who live in the violation of the first and great command. Do we not often find youth, especially in well educated families, possessed of all those amiable qualities, which Dr. Ware mentions as proofs of freedom from moral evil? Do we not see a sweetness and tenderness of disposition, which keep them at the greatest distance from doing any thing to injure a fellow creature? And do we not see too either a power of conscience, or a delicate sense of what is decent and honourable, which leads them to abhor every

open vice ? This is called *innocence*. But is not innocence of this sort often associated with forgetfulness of God, and the neglect of all the peculiar duties of religion ? Let multitudes, blooming in all the attractive loveliness of youthful innocence, measure their moral affections and character by that holy law, in which God asserts his rightful claims, requiring them to love him with all the heart, and to worship him in spirit and in truth ; and will they not find themselves guilty before God, and be compelled to say, as the Apostle did, “ I was alive without the law once ; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died ? ” In the lamentable instances of this kind, which constantly occur, we see that what is called *youthful innocence* actually consists with that alienation of heart from God, which is treated in the Scriptures, as the greatest of sins, and indeed as the foundation and sum of all moral evil. How then can Dr. Ware make it an evidence of freedom from moral evil ? If it may consist with moral evil in youth, why not in childhood ? But the argument is stronger than this. If what is called innocence actually consists with a high degree of moral evil in youth ; much more may it consist with a smaller degree of the same in early childhood.

I reason in the same way respecting the other characteristics of early life, mentioned by Dr. Ware. How does the “simplicity” or artlessness of children prove, that they are not morally corrupt ? They may be simple, unsuspecting, and artless, because they have had no opportunities or temptations to become otherwise. They may have what is sometimes denominated *purity* ; that is, they may be free from the contamination of those vices, which are stamped with a visible and disgraceful grossness, because they have not been expos-

ed to that contamination, or because a regard to reputation, or the power of conscience has been a salutary restraint; and yet divine truth may decide, that "they have not the love of God in their hearts." Nor is *that disposition to speak the truth*, which appears in children, any proof that they are free from depravity. They may speak the truth, because it is the way to obtain the gratification of their desires. When they are hungry, they may speak the truth, and say, we are hungry, because it is the way to get food. Whatever may be their wants, they may speak the truth, and tell their friends what their wants are, because this is the way to get a supply. We well know that honesty is the best policy; and children may begin to learn this, while very young. But does speaking the truth from any such principle prove that they are not depraved? Dr. Ware supplies us with a very satisfactory answer. "The greatest liar," he says, "does by the constitution of his nature, doubtless speak many truths to every lie he utters." He is *the greatest liar*; and this surely is saying that he is the subject of no ordinary degree of depravity. But in perfect consistency with all this depravity, he finds motives to speak *many truths* to one lie. Since then there are so many motives to speak the truth in those who are morally depraved, and since a prevailing habit of speaking the truth does, in the case mentioned by Dr. Ware, consist with that shocking degree of depravity which is found in *the greatest liar*; it is perfectly plain, that merely speaking the truth can never prove either men or children to be free from depravity.

"How early," says Dr. Ware, "does the infant discover affection, attachment, and gratitude to those from whom it receives kindness!" If, as he thinks, this is an evidence of freedom from sin in children, why not in

men? But on this point, he who knew what was in man, guards us against mistake. "If ye love them who love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?"

The amiable characteristics of early life are made so important a topic of argument by Dr. Ware, that it may be proper to follow him a little farther. What he says p. 28, as to the original freedom of children from cruelty, their tenderness, compassion &c. is, I doubt not, generally correct. I allow, that children do not naturally take pleasure in giving pain to insects, or any other sensitive beings, and that, when they do mischief, it is not generally from the love of mischief, as the real motive, but from the love of action and strong excitement, or some other similar cause. But what does this prove, as to the existence of depravity? Men, as well as children, and men who live without God, who disregard the obligations of his law, and exhibit a character at the utmost distance from holiness, may still have no disposition to cruelty, but may be tender, sympathetic, pitiful. But can this prove that they are free from moral depravity? No more than speaking the truth can prove "the greatest liar" free from depravity.

In regard to all the particulars above noticed, the plain truth is, that, in order to qualify human beings for the state in which they are destined to live, and for the relations they are to sustain, God has given them a variety of natural appetites and natural affections, which, though capable of being made auxiliaries to virtue, and conducive to the ends of benevolence, have not, in themselves, any thing of the nature of holiness, but are perfectly distinct from it, and may be cultivated to a high degree in those, in whom moral principle is prostrated. The infidel may have them all; and so may the man

who idolizes the world ; and so may the profane swearer, the duellist, and the ambitious conqueror. This is the case with all the lovely characteristics of early life, which Dr. Ware makes so prominent in his delineation of human nature. Be it so that his delineation is just,—that human beings in early life, and in many instances afterwards, do possess all the sweetness of the natural affections. It does not follow from this, that either children or men are free from moral depravity. The natural affections, which in a considerable degree show themselves even in irrational animals, are indeed not only blameless, but amiable and useful ; and forever to be admired is the wisdom and the goodness of that Being, who has endued us with them. And any one who should assert these natural affections to be any part of human depravity, or any indication of a depraved nature, would mistake as grossly, as if he should assert a man's senses or limbs to be a part of depravity. But no less obvious is the mistake of the man, who considers them as a proof of freedom from depravity. They prove neither the one nor the other. Their existence and operation, simply considered, are never made the subject of divine legislation ; though the divine law directs how they are to be used, and to what ends they are to be made subservient. It is only in this last view, that they assume a moral aspect.

The conclusion, to which I wish to conduct my readers on this subject, results directly, it will be observed, from a matter of fact, with which we are familiarly acquainted. We know by experience and observation, that the natural affections, sympathies and instincts of man really exist and are active in those who are morally depraved. And although Scripture and observation unite in teaching, that there are some forms or degrees

of moral evil, which generally destroy natural affection; it is obvious that other forms and degrees of it do not. From the actual appearances of human nature, no one could ever suppose, that the amiable qualities which have been mentioned as belonging to men, whether old or young, have any necessary connexion with moral character. And certainly no one can suppose this, who makes the divine law the standard of moral character. What is called natural affection neither constitutes that which the law requires, nor shows the absence of that which it forbids.

I have dwelt so long upon this particular point, because it is in reality of great consequence, and because it is one which has occasioned, and is still likely to occasion a variety of mistakes, both theoretic and practical.

Dr. Ware remarks, p. 27, that children are generally simple and unsuspecting, "until the disposition and tendency of nature has been *changed* by education, example, and circumstances." Now I very much doubt whether the possession of a character opposite to the simplicity and unsuspectingness of children, implies any essential "change in the disposition or tendency of nature." Because it is easy enough to account for it, that a child or youth, who is now simple and unsuspecting, because he has not been versed in the subtle and imposing arts of life, and has never been in circumstances which have tempted him to learn those arts, and so has never had the latent properties of his own nature brought into action, or been exposed to suffering from the deceit and wickedness of others, should afterwards become artful and false in his practices, and suspicious in his temper, without any radical change. The natural faculties and dispositions of the mind admit of an endless

variety of modifications. Difference of animal temperament and of external circumstances may originate innumerable differences in men's visible conduct, and in the aspect of their character, while their intellectual faculties and moral dispositions are substantially alike.

Secondly. Dr. Ware attempts to prove his doctrine respecting human nature by the following argument ; p. 26. "How universally is the infant an object of interest to those about it ! Would it be so, if it manifested such tokens, as the Orthodox doctrine of depravity supposes, of a disposition and tendency wholly directed to evil, and appeared to possess nothing good, and no tendency to good?"

In replying to this reasoning, I would refer to the representations, which Dr. Ware has repeatedly made, of the state of infancy. He says, that men at first are not the subjects of either moral good or evil, and have no disposition to the one more than the other. And he puts the same thing in a different form, when he says, p. 41, "that men by their natural birth receive no moral character, and have none before they are born again." Now take children in the state in which Dr. Ware here represents them to be ; i. e. before they have any moral character or any inclination to good or evil. According to this representation, they really "appear to possess nothing good, and no tendency to good ;" of course, if Dr. Ware reasons correctly, they cannot be "the objects of interest to those about them."

But although this conclusion seems to follow from our Author's remarks, taken together ; I am by no means convinced of its correctness. Is there nothing in children, viewed as subjects of depravity, which can render them objects of interest to those about them ? Does it excite no interest in us, to look upon those who are

possessed of so many faculties, and so many engaging characteristics, which may render them amiable and useful in human society? But there is a subject of higher interest still, which Dr. Ware, at the time of writing p. 26, seems wholly to have overlooked. Little children, though morally corrupt, have immortal souls, and are capable of endless happiness, or misery. And beside this, they are placed under a dispensation of mercy, and may become children of God, and heirs of his kingdom, "to the praise of the glory of his grace." Are not these faculties, these circumstances, and these prospects sufficient to render children interesting objects? Nay, does not the very fact, that they are subjects of moral corruption, and exposed to a state of irrecoverable ruin, render them objects of a still deeper interest? Were not the unbelieving Jews, and the corrupt, idolatrous gentiles interesting objects to an apostle? Is it not the very corruption, guilt, and wretchedness of unconverted sinners, that excites such compassion towards them in the hearts of Christians? And how was it with our blessed Saviour? Did not he feel a most sincere, lively interest in those who were lost, and because they were lost? And have not men, dead in trespasses and sins, been objects of the highest interest to their merciful Creator?

Thirdly. Another argument of Dr. Ware in support of his theory is thus stated. "The doctrine of depravity is repulsive. The mind naturally revolts at it. It *seems* at first, to all men universally, to be inconsistent with the divine perfection. But the first impression is made upon us by the nature which God has given us; and I think we should be slow to believe that a nature, thus given to all, is intended to mislead, and actually does mislead all, on so important a subject." p. 22.

Here let it be remembered, that the question in controversy between the two parties, is, whether the first moral feelings of man are right. The argument of Dr. Ware, just stated, assumes that they are right, and so is another instance of taking for granted the point in debate. Admit the doctrine of depravity to be true, and the fact of its being repulsive to the natural feelings of men is easily accounted for, from the depravity itself. It is surely no uncommon thing for the feelings of wicked men to revolt at a faithful representation of the vileness of their character, and the greatness of their ill-desert, especially if that representation comes clothed with authority. Those feelings, which render the doctrine of man's sinfulness repulsive, are, in our apprehension, a part of his sinfulness. If he has a spirit of pride and self-complacency; a doctrine, which tends to humble pride, and to oppose the spirit of self-complacency, will of course be repulsive. But this is not a solitary case. The feelings of man revolt at the strict and holy demands of the law. They equally revolt at the high requisitions of the gospel. The feelings of a very amiable youth revolted at the command of Christ, to "sell all that he had and give to the poor." Was the fault in the command, or in his feelings? Does not the New Testament account for that disgust and enmity of man which the Christian religion has to encounter, by the fact that he is sinful? And does not the self-righteous, self-exalting spirit, which lurks in man's heart, manifestly tend to give a repulsiveness to any doctrine, or any religion, which shows his character despoiled of its moral beauty, degraded and disgraced, and the object of God's disapprobation? How can we for a moment think, that man's natural feelings are a proper test of what is true, and of what is consistent with the perfections of God,

when the Bible constantly directs us to a test, so exceedingly different? Let man be just what he is in his natural, unrenewed state, and it becomes an inseparable attribute of the religion of the cross, that it is *offensive*.

The circumstance that "the scheme of total moral depravity, or of any original bias to evil rather than good, is something different from what we should expect, and involves difficulty," is indeed, as Dr. Ware says, "a reason for yielding our assent with caution, and not without very satisfactory evidence." In this light we have viewed it; and, according to this maxim, we have regulated our belief. The repulsiveness of the doctrine of depravity, and the natural reluctance to receive it, which Dr. Ware justly states to be universal, and which the Orthodox have probably felt as strongly as others, would not surely have been overcome, as it has been, by evidence of ordinary clearness.

Fourthly. Another argument, which Dr. Ware uses in support of his scheme, is derived from "a general view of the commands, precepts, exhortations, promises and threatenings of religion, and from the whole history of the divine dispensations to men." p. 29.

We begin with the three first. What then do the divine commands, precepts, and exhortations show? They show what mankind *ought to be*, not what they *are*. Can Dr. Ware really think, what his argument seems to imply, that God's requiring men to be holy, proves that they already are holy? His commands undoubtedly presuppose that those, to whom they are given, are moral agents; of course, that they possess all the properties, which are necessary to constitute them proper subjects of law. But is freedom from moral corruption essential to moral agency? If so, then as soon as men

become sinners, they cease to be moral agents. And if they cease to be moral agents, they can be under no moral obligation. How then can God with propriety require them to repent, or in any respect to obey his law? And what shall we say to those commands and exhortations of the Bible, which require men to be converted, to repent, to wash themselves from sin? As it is evident from the nature of these commands and exhortations, that they cannot be enjoined upon any but sinners; and as Dr. Ware's argument implies that sinners cannot properly receive them; it would seem, they ought to be blotted out. But if freedom from sin is not essential to moral agency; in other words, if every thing essential to moral agency is found in those who are depraved; and if nothing but what is essential to moral agency is required, in order that divine commands may be given to men; then God's giving such commands proves nothing one way or the other, as to the existence of moral corruption. This, I think, is a sufficient answer to the argument of Dr. Ware, now under consideration, and to much of the reasoning of Whitby and Taylor on the same subject.

Should any one here introduce the distinction which Dr. Ware makes in another place, between men's being sinners, and their *making themselves* sinners; between the character born with them, and that which is acquired; I should endeavour to make it appear, that the distinction has no concern with this subject. Sin is always of the same nature; and at whatever time, and in whatever instances it exists, it neither destroys nor weakens the obligation of the divine commands. And this is the same as saying, that divine commands may be given to man, and may be obligatory upon him, notwithstanding his native depravity. And if so, then their being actu-

ally given cannot afford any argument against *native* depravity. If sin exists in any moral agent, it must have had a beginning. But whether it began at one time or another, is not a circumstance which affects its nature. Suppose it began to exist at a period after the commencement of moral agency; it must have consisted radically in a wrong disposition or affection of heart. If an outward act is sinful, it is sinful because it is the expression or effect of that wrong disposition. Suppose now that moral evil began to exist at the very commencement of moral agency; still it must have consisted precisely in the same thing, that is, in a sinful affection or disposition. In this respect there is no difference. Do you say that, in the last case, the supposed disposition or affection could not have been really sinful, because there was no preceding exercise of moral agency which could be its cause? I answer, the same is true, in case moral evil is supposed to begin at any subsequent period. It is perfectly clear, that the *first* sinful affection or disposition cannot be consequent upon any preceding act of moral agency, as its proper cause, unless a right act can be the cause of a wrong one; or unless there can be a sinful act *before the first* sinful act, and that sinful act, which is before the first, can be the cause of the first. But it surely needs no proof, that all the exercises of moral agency, which precede the first existence of moral evil, must be right. Whether therefore the *beginning* of sinful affection is coeval with the beginning of moral agency, or not, it cannot be derived from any *faulty* exercise of moral agency, which preceded. But if by men's *making themselves sinners*, Dr. Ware means that they first become sinners by an act or exercise of theirs which precedes their being sinful, and which of course cannot be sinful itself; this is the same as holding, that the *first*

existence of sin in man is derived from a *sinless exercise, as its cause*. But who ever entertained so absurd an opinion as this?

But if by men's making themselves sinners, or becoming sinners, Dr. Ware only means that, when they begin to sin, they exercise their intellectual and moral powers, free from coercion; or that the particular sins they commit are voluntary, and that their sinful affections are, in the most proper and perfect sense, *their own*; then I say, this is all true of those who begin to be sinners, when they first begin to be moral agents. The supposition then of sin's commencing so early, is no more inconsistent with the commands of God, than the supposition of its commencing subsequently.

Let me say also, that the distinction, above referred to, between what is native or original in moral agents, and what is acquired, is one with which an unbiassed conscience is not likely to give itself any concern. Sure I am, that the divine law has nothing to do with it. The law requires moral agents to love God and man, that is, to be holy. If they are destitute of the holy affection required, whether at the commencement of their moral agency, or afterwards, the law regards them as transgressors. Conscience regards them in the same light. If I look into my heart, and find that I have had a disposition or affection contrary to what the law requires, my conscience condemns me for it. If I have had that sinful disposition for a long time, I feel myself to be so much the more criminal. And if I began to exercise that disposition as soon as I began to be a moral agent, and have exercised it ever since, I must be regarded by myself, and by others, as criminal in a very high degree. Present before a court of justice, and before the world, a man, who has

always shown a lying, malicious, thievish disposition, from the time when he was first capable of showing any disposition ; would he not be regarded with deep abhorrence, and sentenced with unsparing severity ? It is evident then, that common sense, not trammelled by false reasoning, unites with the word of God in condemning sinful affection, whatever may be the date of its origin. Whether it is the first affection of moral agents, or has its commencement afterwards, it is equally their own. In either case, they are free and unconstrained in exercising it, and possess every thing necessary to render them proper subjects of law, and capable of obedience.

This is a subject on which most writers of the Arminian school have, in my apprehension, fallen into a variety of palpable mistakes. And their mistakes, so far as I am able to judge, have arisen from a wrong notion of moral agency ; and their wrong notion of moral agency, from their not attending, with sufficient care, to the properties which the mind actually exhibits, and the laws according to which its operations are, and always must be regulated.

Dr. Ware argues against the doctrine of native depravity, from "the promises and threatenings of religion." But what do these prove ? If God promises eternal life to those who obey the law, or to those who repent, and believe the gospel, and threatens destruction to those who do not ; does this prove that men are by nature free from moral depravity ? Are not such promises and threats just and proper in relation to those who are naturally depraved ? If not, it must be because natural depravity destroys moral agency. But we have seen above, that if depravity, beginning at any time, is consistent with moral agency ; it is so, if it begins when moral agency begins. And if depravity, beginning so

early, may be consistent with moral agency ; why may it not be consistent with “ the promises and threatenings of religion ? ”

The last particular to be noticed under this head is, “ the whole history of divine dispensations to men.” This, our Author thinks, is an argument against the Orthodox doctrine of depravity. I presume he means the history of God’s goodness. The argument then would be, that God could not be supposed to show such kindness to men, if they were naturally depraved. But this argument is at once confuted by the representations of Scripture. “ God maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Christ represents this as a prominent feature of the divine administration. God is a kind Father, a being of infinite grace, and bestows favours which are wholly undeserved. Plainly then the divine dispensations in the present state, how kind and beneficial soever they may be, cannot be urged as a proof, that men are “ naturally innocent and pure.”

Fifthly. Dr. Ware alludes “ to a great number of particulars,” mentioned in the Scriptures, “ each of which separately,” as he thinks, “ seems to imply that mankind come into the world innocent and pure, the objects of the complacency of their Creator.” p. 29, 30. He instances only in one, but that alone is, in his opinion, decisive of the question. He refers to the manner in which little children are spoken of by our Saviour, and by the Apostle. Matt. xix. 14. “ Suffer little children to come unto me—for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” “ These,” he says, “ seem to have been infants, or at least very small children.” And he adds ; “ There is not the slightest intimation, that these children had become the subjects of any great moral change.” Then comes

his conclusion. "But if they were depraved, destitute of holiness, &c. could our Saviour declare respecting them, "of such is the kingdom of God?"

It will doubtless occur to Dr. Ware, on a review of his Letters, that there is an appearance of a small inconsistency between this passage and some others. He tells us here, that infants, or very small children, belong to the kingdom of God, without "becoming the subjects of any great moral change;" and just below it is implied in his reasoning, that they are not "destitute of holiness." But in p. 20, he describes man in infancy as "destitute of all positive holiness." And p. 41, 42, he represents men by nature as "wanting that personal holiness which is necessary to their becoming members of the kingdom of God," and as needing "a great moral change—in order to their being fit members of that kingdom." Here, infants are destitute of personal holiness, and cannot belong to the kingdom of God without a great moral change; but there, they belong to the kingdom of God as they come into the world, without that moral change.

Let us now return to the reasoning of Dr. Ware from Matt. xix. 14. The question, which contains the point of his argument, is this: "If the children who were brought to our Saviour, were depraved, how could he declare respecting them, of such is the kingdom of God?" I answer, the kingdom of God consists, and will forever consist of those, who have been sinners. All the members of that kingdom will unite in the song; "Unto him who loved us and washed us *from our sins* in his own blood—be glory and dominion forever." So that their belonging, and being destined to belong to Christ's kingdom, proves nothing as to their native character, except that it was such as to need spiritual wash-

ing, or a "great moral change." It is a complaint of the Pharisees, that Christ receives sinners; and he declares it to be the great purpose of his coming into the world to seek and to save that which was lost; to call sinners to repentance, and gather them into his kingdom. He is a Saviour from sin. We have no intimation of his being a Saviour of any except sinners. His whole office, as a Saviour, relates to sinners,—to sinners exclusively. How then does the fact, that any persons, whether old or young, belong to his kingdom, prove that they are not by nature depraved, or that they are without sin? Christ gave it as a reason, why little children should come, or be brought to him, that they belonged, or would belong to his kingdom. Now this reason was certainly as strong, if they were depraved and sinful, as if they were innocent and pure. Their being sinful placed them upon the same general footing with all others, who are invited to come to Christ as a Saviour. If, because they belonged to the kingdom of God, we conclude their nature was free from the pollution of sin, we must make the same conclusion respecting the nature of others who belong to that kingdom. And this perhaps we might do, had not the Bible informed us of whom the kingdom will consist.

Thus far I have admitted the passage to signify, that the children themselves belonged to the kingdom of God. But Rosenmuller, and many others, understand it as teaching, that the members of Christ's kingdom must be *like* little children, and so put it in the same class with the other texts, quoted by Dr. Ware; Mark x. 14. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. "Unless ye be converted and become *as little children*, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—"In malice be ye children."

We well know it to have been the practice of the

Prophets and Apostles, and especially of Christ, to make use of those objects, with which they were familiar, and often those which were present, to illustrate the divine perfections, the character and duty of men, and the general truths of religion ; which is only saying, that in their religious instructions they used familiar metaphors, similes, and comparisons. And it is an acknowledged principle of figurative language, that the object, from which a metaphor or simile is drawn, may not, in its own nature, or principal attributes, truly and exactly resemble that which is meant to be illustrated by it. The resemblance may respect any one of the properties or circumstances of that object, without the least reference to others. In the texts above quoted, Christians are likened to little children. But can we infer from this, that children possess any moral excellence or goodness, like that excellence or goodness of Christians, which is meant to be set forth by the comparison? Christians are also likened to sheep, lambs, doves. But do sheep, lambs, and doves possess moral excellence? Suppose I should say, that the texts, which represent Christians as being like sheep, lambs, and doves, “most clearly imply, until turned from their obvious meaning,” that those animals “are objects of the Saviour’s complacency and affection,” and are “what men become by regeneration.” Would not this argument be as conclusive, as Dr. Ware’s? If he can infer the moral purity of little children, from the circumstance, that Christians are compared to them; I can infer the moral purity of lambs and doves from the same circumstance. To make this subject still clearer, look at the texts which represent the disciples of Christ as salt, light, and the branches of a vine. Do these texts imply that salt, light, or the branches of a vine, have any moral qualities like those, which

these metaphors represent as belonging to Christ's disciples? Look at another case. Christ directs his Apostles to be not only as harmless as doves, but *wise as serpents*. Does the direction imply that serpents have any moral or intellectual qualities, like what he would see in his disciples? Even the *wisdom* of the serpent,—what is it but a mischievous subtilty, which we regard with abhorrence and dread, and which, in its nature and effects, is most unlike the wisdom from above? But there is a stronger case. Christ described to his disciples the conduct of an unjust steward, who, from regard to his own interest, altered his master's accounts, and wickedly released his debtors from part of their obligations. This conduct of the steward Christ held up, as a proper object of imitation; that is, he represented the conduct which his disciples ought to pursue, as being like the conduct of a steward, chargeable with unjust and fraudulent practices. If it were necessary to go any farther, I would recite the passage, in which God is likened to an unjust judge, who, though destitute of humanity, was influenced by the wearisome importunity of a poor widow, to grant her the assistance she craved.

Now what is the natural conclusion from these, and other instances of metaphors, similes, and comparisons, but this; that, in illustrating the truths of religion, the inspired writers lay hold on any object in the physical, animal, civil, or intellectual world, or any thing else, which is suited to the purpose of illustration; that the particular object from which a metaphor is taken, may not, in its nature or principal attributes, resemble that which is to be illustrated by it; and that it is sufficient, if there is any one apparent attribute, relation, or circumstance, which may serve as a foundation for the metaphor, though all the other attributes of the object are

such, that they must be set aside, as utterly incompatible with the design of the metaphor. The properties or circumstances of any *natural* object may be made use of to illustrate things of a *moral* nature. For example; wicked men are represented in Scripture as being like barren trees, dogs, swine, and serpents. Now from the nature of the discourse, common sense always determines what is the particular property, relation, or circumstance, which is the ground of the comparison; as in the instances just mentioned; we easily perceive what it is in barren trees, in dogs, swine, and serpents, which is suited to illustrate the character of wicked men. Who ever supposed that, because these figures imply a likeness of some sort between the wicked men and the things by which they are represented, therefore, those things have a moral nature like the moral nature of Christians? There is indeed something in barren trees, dogs, swine, and serpents, which aptly sets forth the character of the wicked; and this is all that is meant by the figures. So in the case above mentioned, in which Christians are likened to sheep and doves. The mildness and harmlessness of those animals aptly illustrate those properties in Christians, which are expressed by the same names; though the former are merely natural or animal properties; the latter, moral, or spiritual. The same remarks apply to those texts which represent Christians under the similitude of salt, light, and the branches of a vine. There is something in the useful qualities of salt and light, to which the useful character or influence of Christians may fitly be compared; and there is something in the dependence of the branches upon the vine, which fitly represents the dependence of Christians upon their Saviour. Nor is the illustration in these cases any the less striking or just, because salt, light, and the branch-

es of a vine, have only a physical nature, while the character of Christians, which is likened to them, is moral or spiritual. Once more. Christians are represented as pilgrims, soldiers, and conquerors. But did any man ever interpret these figures as implying, that pilgrims, soldiers, and conquerors are free from moral evil, and resemble Christians in moral purity? These last instances show that there may be something even in depraved human beings, on account of which Christians may be likened to them.

Now if such is the principle, which must govern us in the interpretation of all figurative language; how utterly void of force is the favourite argument of Dr. Ware from the texts above recited? Because it is said that, in order to be Christians and enter into the kingdom of heaven, we must become *as little children*, he argues that children have a moral virtue or goodness of the same nature with the holiness of Christians. Suppose now that our Saviour had taken a *lamb*, instead of a child, and had set the harmless, lovely creature in the midst of his disciples, and told them, they must become like that lamb; would it have implied that the lamb had moral goodness, and was "what men become by regeneration?" The plain truth is, that the amiable *natural* qualities, which distinguish little children, and which, as we have seen, are perfectly consistent with the existence of depravity, are made use of to illustrate the amiable *moral* qualities which ought to belong to Christians. The text 1 Cor. xiv. 20, is to receive the same construction. Christians are exhorted to show in their conduct a harmlessness and kindness like that, which is characteristic of children. The natural qualities of children are made to represent the moral virtues of Chris-

tians; precisely on the same principle, that the kind and tender care, which the hen extends towards her young, is made to illustrate the tender mercy of Christ towards sinners.

We have now attended to the chief arguments which Dr. Ware has offered, as the support of his theory of human nature. The reader, after a thorough examination, will judge whether they are conclusive, and to what they really amount.

CHAPTER II.

IN the foregoing chapter, I have made it appear, as I think, that those amiable qualities, which are, really characteristic of early life, and which Dr. Ware has mentioned as indications of moral purity, are in fact of such a nature, that they may consist, and in subsequent life often do consist with depravity, and so cannot afford any argument at all against the common Orthodox doctrine.

But why does Dr. Ware, in his attempt to show what human nature is, confine his attention to a part of those things which are characteristics of early life? How can he think it just, to dwell upon those things only, which are amiable and attractive, while he gives no weight to those of a contrary character? Why especially, does he make such an effort to explain all the appearances of folly and corruption in the youthful mind in such a manner, as to give no support to the common doctrine of the Christian church? Does he find in this no evidence of being warped by a favourite theory? He is "persuaded," as has been noticed be-

fore, "that no man was ever led by personal observation and experience to the thought of an original corruption of human nature." But how happens it that he has this persuasion, when the well known fact is, that sober, thinking men through the Christian world have generally been led by observation and experience, not only to *think* of an original depravity, but to *believe it*? I shall here give the testimony of a man, who had no tinge of melancholy or superstition, and who was as little inclined to judge severely or uncandidly on this subject, as any man living. "I have been employed," he says, "in the education of children and youth more than thirty years, and have watched their conduct with no small attention and anxiety. Yet among the thousands of children, committed to my care, I cannot say with truth, that I have seen *one*, whose native character I had any reason to believe to be virtuous; or whom I could conscientiously pronounce to be free from the evil attributes mentioned above;" that is, disobedience, revenge, selfishness, &c.* But I do not give this as the opinion of a single man. I hesitate not to say, that it has been the opinion of a great majority of enlightened Christians in all ages and countries. And might not Dr. Ware have found various passages of Scripture which announce the very truth I contend for? Might he not have found a man of no less observation and judgment, than Solomon, declaring it as a general truth, that, "foolishness is bound in the heart of a child?" Might he not have found that David's experience led him to the thought of an original, native depravity, when he made it a part of his humble confession before God; "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me?" Might he not

* Dr. Dwight's Theology, Vol. 2, p. 28.

have found that Job's observation or experience led him to the thought of original depravity, when he said, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" and, "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" And might he not have found God himself declaring, directly, in his own name, that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth?"

I have the unhappiness to differ entirely from Dr. Ware on this point, and am persuaded that no man, who is careful to make the law of God his rule of judgment, can avoid the conclusion above expressed. For just consider what are the real characteristics of childhood and youth, in relation to that law. I ask not now what are those amiable affections or instincts, which belong to domestic and social relations; but what are the *moral* characteristics of children;—not what we should *suppose* they must be, from the views we have entertained of God; but what they are in fact. What are the real feelings and actions of children in regard to God's holy law? Begin the examination of childhood at an early period. Begin at the period when moral agency begins; and suppose moral agency begins earlier or later, as you please; and inquire for the disposition which children manifest, in respect to the divine commands. Do they show a heart to love God supremely, when they are two or three years old? Is it said, they are not generally capable, at that age, of having any correct knowledge of God, or of their duty, and so are not capable of loving him? Take then a later period. Follow them to the age of four, or five years, to six, or ten, till they have been instructed in religion, and are capable of loving and worshipping God. Do they generally show a disposition to love and worship God then? When they first begin, by visible con-

duct, to exhibit the temper of their minds, as subjects of the divine law ; do they show signs of cheerful, holy obedience ? Does the observation of Christian parents and ministers teach them any thing like this ? Does not their observation rather confirm the truth of what the scriptures declare, as quoted above ? Was there ever a man, who laboured in earnest to teach children the things of religion, and to induce them to keep the divine commands, who did not find their inclinations mighty obstacles to his success ? If children were uncorrupt and pure, they would, as soon as capable, show the proper signs of holiness. Children who are renewed early in life, manifest a desire after God, hatred and dread of sin, and delight in duty. But do not children in general show, at every period of childhood, that they have not the love of God in them ; that they dislike the duties of religion, and choose the ways of sin ? You may set before them the most serious and tender considerations, and may succeed so far, as in some measure to gain their attention, and rouse their conscience. But you will find that their heart has a bias towards the pleasures of sin, which no consideration of duty or of happiness can overcome. With those who judge themselves by the law of God, is not this a matter of fact, a truth written as with a sun-beam ? The earliest period of childhood, to which their memory can extend, furnishes to their own minds abundant evidence of a disinclination to the duties and pleasures of religion, and a relish for the pleasures of sin. What is moral depravity, if this is not ? I do not say that depravity, at first, exists in the highest degree, and that children are at once ripe for the most atrocious deeds. I do not say that children are inclined to lie merely for the sake of lying, without any temptation. They may speak many truths to one false-

hood, as "the greatest liars" may. But we expect great liars will speak falsehood, when they have occasion to do it. Their telling lies now and then, when they have some bad ends to answer, may, as appears from the case which Dr. Ware mentions, render them highly criminal. So with children. They may generally be disposed, in the simplicity of their hearts, to speak the truth. But has not every one who has had the care of little children, found them inclined to lie when tempted to it? Does it not require unremitting care and every possible effort, to guard them against the practice of lying, whenever they think it the way to exculpate themselves, or to secure any favourite gratification? And when a habit of lying is once formed in children, is it not found to be extremely difficult to correct it? The same might be said as to other tendencies of the youthful mind. When every thing goes smoothly with children, and all their wishes are gratified, they may exhibit a disposition quite pleasant and friendly. So may persons arrived at manhood, though really possessed of a contrary disposition. But how is it with little children, when their wishes are crossed, and when they are subjected to suffering? How is it, when they are flattered, and when they are slighted? Do they not very early show signs of the same temper of mind, which we see exhibited in active life by the proud, the envious, the selfish, the wrathful, and the revengeful? In short, if we find any thing in mankind at large, which furnishes proof of depravity; we find it in little children; not indeed in the same form, or degree; for they are not capable of this. But we find what is of the same nature. And even as to form or degree; do not the pride, the selfishness, the illwill, the revenge,

exhibited by little children, resemble the same evil passions in a man, as much as their bodies or their minds resemble his? They have the understanding, the bodily strength, the features, and all the attributes of a man, though in miniature. And who that watches the character of children, with the eye of a Christian or a philosopher, can have the least doubt, that they possess, in a correspondent degree, all the moral attributes, and especially the moral corruptions, which appear among men? As soon as they are capable, they show these corruptions by intelligible outward signs. And they show them in a manner perfectly agreeable to the state and circumstances of childhood. True, they do not show them as soon as they are born. Nor do they show a rational mind, as soon as they are born. And yet who ever doubted that children naturally possess a rational mind? Dr. Ware says that, "by their birth men become reasonable, accountable beings." But does a child actually show reason, as soon as he is born? And would Dr. Ware consider a child really accountable, as soon as he is born? But reason and accountableness universally belong to mankind; and children begin early to show signs of being reasonable and accountable beings, and exhibit more and more evidence of it, till they come to the understanding of a man. Now I refer it to impartial observers, to judge, whether children do not exhibit as clear signs of moral evil, as they do of reason; and whether they do not begin to exhibit these signs as early as could be expected, allowing moral evil to be a native property of their minds? Although they are by nature depraved; still, in order that their depravity may be visibly acted out, they must not only be capable of showing it by outward signs, but must have occasion thus to show it. Now as soon as children have ability and

occasion to show their dispositions, they generally exhibit as clear evidence of initial depravity, as of intelligence. The occasion may not be constant, nor very frequent; any more than the occasion for actual falsehood among "the greatest liars." But this circumstance does not in either case affect the clearness of the evidence.

CHAPTER III.

WHETHER human depravity can in any proper sense be called *native*, *innate*, *natural*, or *hereditary*, is a question, which seems to call for more particular discussion. There are many pretences against the common doctrine, which ought to be exposed, and some difficulties attending it which ought, if possible, to be cleared away. Dr. Ware allows that "all men are sinners," but says, they are so by *habit*, not by *nature*. All the wickedness of man is, in his view, perfectly consistent with his coming into being, innocent and pure. With a view to what he and others have advanced in opposition to the doctrine of *native* depravity, and to present the doctrine to others precisely in the light in which it has presented itself to my own mind, I shall allow myself in the free discussion which follows.

My first inquiry respects the proper meaning and use of the words and phrases commonly employed in stating the doctrine; such as *native*, *innate*, *natural*, *born with a depraved nature*, &c. To satisfy myself on this subject, I take a number of examples, in which the words and phrases are employed with undoubted propriety.

First example. Man has a *natural* disposition to society : or he has *by nature* a propensity to social life ; or he *naturally* possesses a social principle, or is *naturally* formed for society. Such phrases are frequent ; nor did I ever hear any objection against them. But what is the fact which these phrases denote ? Do children actually show a social principle, as soon as they are born ? Do they immediately give visible signs of social affection, or of that propensity which is the foundation of domestic and civil society ? Is it not a long time, before they become capable of expressing or exercising the social principle ? What then do we mean by its being *natural* to man, or his having it *by nature*, but that man is born with *such a constitution*, or in *such a state*, that if he is not turned aside from the real bent of his nature, he certainly will be a social being, or will be actually inclined to live in society ; in other words, that his being disposed to choose society, rather than solitude, results directly from the original constitution or tendency of his mind ? If he choose a hermitage, he does violence to his nature ; he shows that there has been some jar in his constitution, some unnatural shock to his temper.

Second example. Man is *naturally pitiful*. He is born with a principle of sympathy, or compassion ; or pity is one of the natural, original principles of the human heart. These expressions, which are in common use, do not mean that pity begins to show itself, or even to be distinctly exercised, as soon as man is born ; but that *it uniformly results from his original constitution* ; that it is the certain consequence of the state in which he is born, or the temper of mind which he possesses by his birth ; and that, in every case, it will in due time show itself, unless his nature is perverted.

As a *third example*, I would mention what is com-

monly called *natural affection* ; by which is intended particularly the affection of parents for their offspring. Man is born with such a nature, or has such a tendency in his constitution, that, as soon as the relation exists, he feels the affection. However distant from his birth the time when it is first distinctly felt and acted out ; it is called *natural*, because with such a nature or constitution as his, unbroken and unperturbed, he will certainly feel the affection, whenever he comes into the relation. The affection implies no refinement upon his nature. It rises naturally or spontaneously, like the affection which irrational animals show for their young.

Fourth example. We speak of a man as having an original strength of mind, or liveliness of imagination, superiour to what others possess. This might not appear for many years. But it is at length evident, that the difference cannot be accounted for by difference of culture, and so must arise from difference of original constitution. On this account we call it *native superiority*. We say, a man was *born a king*, or was *born a commander* ; because uniformly, from early life, he showed marks of an elevated character, or qualities which fitted him to command. We consider those qualities *natural*, because it is plain, that they are no more owing to his education, than the features of his countenance ; which may perhaps indicate, as clearly as the qualities of his mind, his high destination. Of another we say, that he was *born an idiot* ; that he had an original want of understanding, or a natural defect in the structure of his mind ; because his idiotism cannot be traced to any calamity which has befallen him since his birth, but is manifestly owing to the constitution of mind, with which he was born. In this case, we say his mental imbecility was

natural to him ; though there might have been a considerable time after his birth, before it appeared.

Thus too we say of Handel, that he had a *native* or *inborn taste for music*, or that he was *born a musician* ; because he showed that taste very early, and no influence of education or example could account for the difference, which existed between him and other men, in this respect. Milton, we say, had a *native* sublimity of mind and fruitfulness of invention, which qualified him to be a distinguished poet.

Fifth example. We sometimes say of a bodily disease, that it is *native*, or that it was *born with a man* ; because it appears manifestly to result from the original constitution of his body, though the disease did not show itself for many years. It is often said, a man was born with a consumptive constitution, or with a state of body which tended to a consumption ; and it is deemed a matter of great importance in the medical art, to discover when this is the case.

If another example were necessary, I might notice the manner in which we apply the words and phrases, now under consideration, to irrational animals ; as when we say, it is *natural* for serpents to bite ; it is the *nature* of birds, to fly ; of lions, to be carnivorous ; of fishes, to swim. But the illustration has been pursued far enough to answer the purpose intended.

I would not however proceed, without inquiring a little into the use of the word *hereditary*, in relation to these subjects. It is obviously suitable to speak of particular properties of mind and of body as *hereditary*, when they can most satisfactorily be accounted for on the common principle of a *likeness between parents and children*. There is a general resemblance which a child bears to his parents, as belonging to the same species ; and a par-

ticular resemblance which he bears to them, as individuals. Observation shows that, in regard to the faculties and dispositions of the mind, as well as the structure of the body, parents universally transmit to their offspring a general resemblance, and frequently, a particular, individual resemblance. With respect to each of these, what is more common than to say, that children *inherit* it, or derive it from their parents? Diseases are said to be hereditary in certain families, where they are observed to descend from generation to generation, and where, at the same time, they evidently result from something originally belonging to the constitution. There is, for example, an hereditary blindness and deafness; an hereditary firmness or weakness of bodily constitution; an hereditary strength or imbecility of mind. A man inherits a slowness or quickness of imagination, a quietness or irritability of temper, &c. Wherever there is an obvious resemblance between children and their parents with respect to any properties of body or mind, especially if that resemblance has been the same for many generations, and is most easily accounted for on the common principle, that children bear the likeness of their parents; we hesitate not to say, those properties are hereditary. And some respectable writers have been led by the particular opinions they have held on the subject, to speak of *piety* in the same manner. Southey says, "Talents of no ordinary kind, as well as a *devotional* temper, were *hereditary* in the family of the Wesleys." I mention it merely to show in what sense the *word* is used.

Let us now bring this train of remarks to bear directly upon the subject of investigation. Here we are to inquire, whether the circumstances, which lead us to apply the words *natural*, *native*, *innate*, and *hereditary*, to

such bodily and mental properties, as those above mentioned, do in fact belong to the moral depravity or sinfulness of man. We should pursue this inquiry with special care, because the result must be of great consequence in settling the present controversy.

I say then, that moral depravity is a thing which has been found in the human species from generation to generation. There never has been a single exception in any age. Dr. Ware mentions it as a truth which no one will deny, *that all men are sinners*. This is not a general, but an universal truth. Every child of Adam has sinned. Moral depravity is as universal as reason, or memory, or social affection, or pity, or any of the bodily appetites. We can as easily find a man without any of these, as without sin. So far then as the universality or constant occurrence of the fact is concerned, there is as much propriety in saying, that moral depravity is natural to man, as that the faculty of reason, or any bodily appetite is.

Another circumstance, which justifies us in applying the epithets innate, natural &c. to human depravity, is, that it shows itself *very early*. We are indeed incapable of looking into the mind of an infant, and seeing the first emotions of moral evil. It is impossible that our memory should go back to what took place in our own minds, during our infancy. Nor can we have any definite knowledge of what takes place in the minds of others in infancy; because they are unable to exhibit those intelligible signs, which are to us the only medium of access to the mind. But among the earliest things, which our memory can recal in ourselves, or which we are able to observe in others, are the indications and incipient exercises of sinful affection. Now if, as far back as our recollection can go in regard to ourselves, or our observa-

tion in regard to others, we uniformly find marks of moral evil ; is it not reasonable to think it may exist before ? and that we should be perfectly satisfied of its earlier existence, if we could, in any way, trace back to an earlier period, the operations of our own minds, or if children at an earlier period could, by any intelligible signs, indicate to us the moral state of their minds ? In order that any affection may show itself by outward signs, and especially that its actings may be distinctly recollected, it must have acquired a certain degree of strength. But is it not according to the law of our nature, that the affection should exist in a lower degree, before that time ? We are, indeed, unable to determine how early depraved affection may begin to operate. But considering how early it rises to such strength, as to make itself visible ; and considering too the gradual growth of every thing in the mind ; can we avoid the conclusion, that it probably exists, though in a feebler state, much sooner than it becomes visible ? May it not be with our moral nature in this respect, as it is with the peculiar properties of an eagle, a serpent, or a lion, which have always been considered as existing radically in the original constitution of the animal, though they begin to show themselves a considerable time after ? Be this, however, as it may ; the actual appearance of moral evil in man is, in common cases, very early ; so that as far as the period of its first occurrence is concerned, there is a plain reason for calling it natural, or innate.

Another circumstance, distinguishing those things which are properly called *natural* or *innate*, or which we say belong to man from the first, is, that they cannot be traced to any change in the constitution of his nature, subsequent to his birth, and do not presuppose such a change. If idiotism is occasioned by a fracture of the

skull, or by the influence of disease, it is not called natural. But if no such calamity has befallen a man, who shows himself to be without understanding, and his want of mind results, as a direct consequence, from his original constitution ; in other words, if he never had any mind ; and if, with such an original structure, it would be impossible that he ever should have any ; then his idiotism is called *natural*, or he is said to be *born an idiot*.

Now is the moral depravity of man to be traced to any calamity which has befallen him, or to any change which has taken place in his moral constitution, subsequently to his birth ? Does it presuppose that there has been such a change ? If a change takes place adequate to account for moral depravity ; it must be an universal change, because it must account for the fact, that all are sinners. The position then would be, that, although men are universally born without any disposition or tendency in their nature, which can account for the depravity they afterwards exhibit ; a change uniformly takes place, which is the spring of all the moral evil actually found in man. And this change must take place very early, because by the supposition, it must precede the first appearance of moral evil. We have then before us a most important event ; an universal change in the moral constitution of man ; a change which always takes place very early in childhood, and which satisfactorily accounts for all the sins which mankind commit. Here it becomes a matter of deep interest to inquire, what is the cause of a change, so momentous in its nature, and in its results ? Is that cause *extraneous* to the human mind, or *within* the mind ? If any opponent should say, the cause is *extraneous* to the mind ; then I should wish him to solve the difficulty of supposing, that our moral nature, without any faulty conduct of

ours, is subjected to the calamitous influence of such a cause. Call that which is the cause of the change, "education, example, and circumstances," as Dr. Ware does, p. 27. It is a cause, which is extraneous to the mind, and over which, especially at so early a period, we can have little or no control. I should wish Dr. Ware to show, upon his own principles, how we can be accountable for the consequences of a change, produced in such a manner. And before leaving the subject, I should be gratified to know, how he would make it appear consistent, that a God of infinite goodness should expose his feeble, helpless creatures, in the very first stage of their existence, to the operation of a cause so dreadful.

But if the cause of the supposed change is within the mind, it must consist in something which belongs to the original constitution of the mind, or in something which is superinduced upon the mind, after its first existence. If it consists in something which belongs to the original constitution of the mind; then we are thrown back upon the very difficulty which Dr. Ware and others think it so important to shun. But if the cause of the supposed change consists in something which is superinduced upon the mind, after its first existence; it is certainly proper that we should inquire, what that thing is; what has occasioned it, or by what means it has been superinduced upon the mind. And the answer, if there could be an answer to this inquiry, would only make way for another of the same kind, and that for another, and so on indefinitely.

These are some of the difficulties which attend the supposition, that the depravity, which man actually exhibits, is owing to any calamity which befalls him, or to any change which takes place in his moral constitution, subsequently to his birth; while on the other hand, the

supposition, if admitted, has no advantage whatever over the common supposition, that our actual wickedness is to be traced back to what is original or native in our moral constitution. It gives no convenience or clearness to any philosophical reasoning, which we may think it proper to pursue in relation to this subject; as it only presents other causes, of the existence of which we have no evidence, and which, if they were real, must after all be traced back to the original constitution of our nature. The supposition has no advantage in regard to our views of the divine character, it being every way as easy to reconcile it with the goodness of God, that he should give us originally a constitution, which uniformly results in actual transgression, as that he should expose us to the operation of causes, such as Dr. Ware names, p. 27, which uniformly produce a change in our nature afterwards, from purity to pollution.

Against the supposition of such a change in our nature, there are strong objections. In the first place; so far as our observation goes, all the causes which operate upon the human mind, are suited only to excite to action, in various ways, the powers and dispositions actually belonging to our nature, but not to change that nature. Secondly; the supposition of such a change in our nature is wholly *unphilosophical*, because wholly *unnecessary*. It is as unphilosophical, as to suppose a change of nature in order to account for the serpent's venomous bite, the lion's fierceness, or that intelligence, gratitude, sympathy, and kindness of man Dr. Ware considers as natural. Thirdly. The uniformity of the fact that men become sinners, denotes that it results from the settled constitution of our nature, and not from any occasional or accidental cause. We reason thus respecting things which uniformly take place in the physical world; and

why not in the moral world? If our becoming sinners were not owing to a steady law or principle of our nature, but to some accidental cause ; we should, in all reason, expect to find some exceptions. The uniform motions of the planets denote a uniform cause, a settled constitution of nature ; while the occasional appearance of transient meteors denotes occasional, transient causes. If there were no settled constitution or law of nature respecting the motion of the planets, who would expect to find their motions constant and invariable ?

Now just as far as there is evidence, that man's actual sinfulness is owing to the original constitution of his moral nature, and not to any change in his nature experienced after his birth ; just so far we have reason to consider his depravity natural.

I have yet another reason for considering man's depravity *natural*. I look at other principles in man, which are generally considered natural, such as the animal appetites, the love of parents for their offspring, and also that gratitude, compassion, and kindness, which Dr. Ware notices, "as original attributes of human nature." I find these natural principles operate *freely* and *spontaneously*. It requires no laborious discipline to produce them, no urgency of motives to excite them to action. When the proper occasion occurs, they arise unsolicited. This is a general mark of those active principles, which are allowed to be *native* properties of man. The same mark distinguishes man's moral depravity. Take children, as soon as they are capable of manifesting what they are ; and let the occasion for exercising a corrupt affection occur. How soon is it excited? How spontaneously does the feeling of pride, ill will, and revenge show itself in their looks and actions? It gets possession of them before they are aware. It arises of its own

accord, before they have considered whether it is good or bad. They first learn its turpitude from having felt its spontaneous operation in their own minds. And it is the case not only in childhood, but in every period of life, that sinful affections arise readily, as soon as the occasion occurs. So far then as this circumstance has influence, it is a justification of the doctrine of native depravity.

But moral evil in man has still another mark of being natural or innate ; and that is, that *it is hard to be eradicated, and resists powerful means of overcoming it.* From this we are led to think, that it has taken deep root in man's nature, and is not an accidental or superficial thing. The christian, who makes the greatest efforts to eradicate his depraved affections, has, from his own experience, the clearest evidence that they adhere to the very constitution of his moral nature ; that they make a part of himself ; and that getting rid of them is like cutting off a hand, or plucking out an eye. He has evidence too, that while the heart is unrenewed, or while man continues in his natural state, no dictate of conscience, no motive or influence which can be brought to bear upon his mind, can subdue his selfishness and pride, or induce him to love God and be humble. This fact is as well supported by experience, as any fact whatever in the history of the mind. And as there is no other way, but experience, to prove it, on supposition of its real existence ; my last appeal for the truth of the Orthodox doctrine of depravity would be to the experience of Christians.

There is one circumstance of human depravity, which justice requires me distinctly to notice, as it seems utterly incapable of being reconciled to any scheme but the Orthodox. When we look upon a new

born child, we predict, that he will certainly be a sinner. It is not a conjecture, nor a probability, but a certainty. It is a thing which no precautions, no circumstances whatever can prevent. Let the child be, from the first, in the hands of parents, nurses, and tutors, as holy as angels, so that he shall never hear any thing but words of truth and love, and never see any thing but examples of excellence; still we predict with certainty, that he will not escape the pollution of sin; that he will be a transgressor of the divine law. Now such a prediction as this must rest on some fixed principle, some certain, uniform cause; just like our prediction respecting the future developement which the child will make of any bodily or mental power. We know beforehand, that if the child is free from special defects, he will speak, and walk, and love, and desire, and remember. This foreknowledge in us rests upon the full evidence we have, that such is *the settled law or constitution of human nature*. It is precisely on the same ground, that we predict the future transgression of the new-born infant. The prediction does not imply any particular knowledge of this individual child, in distinction from other children; for, in the case which I suppose, we only know that he is *human*. We found our prediction solely upon the fact, that the child has *human nature*. We know that it is the invariable law of his nature, that he will be a transgressor. If there is no such steady cause, no such invariable law, how can we certainly conclude that this particular child, born of pious, faithful, exemplary parents, will be a sinner? May not this child, if such as Dr. Ware supposes every infant to be,—“innocent, pure, free from all disposition or tendency to sin,” and under the salutary influence of the best of parents;—may not such a child be secured against moral evil? Or if this

child should not escape those powerful, calamitous causes, which are supposed to turn our nature from innocence to guilt ; how do we know that some other child of Adam may not ? If there is no steady, no uniformly operating cause, or law of nature, leading to moral evil ; or as Dr. Ware expresses it, “ if man is by nature no more inclined or disposed to vice than to virtue ;” may we not suppose that one of a thousand, or at least one of eight hundred millions, will retain his original purity, and go through this short life without becoming a sinner ? But we are forbidden to suppose this by that sober observation, which teaches us the truth of our Saviour’s maxim, that “ no man can gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.” The cause in the former case is indeed *moral* ; in the latter, *physical*. But in both cases the cause which operates is constant ; and it is the constancy or uniformity of the cause, which enables us, in either case, to form a certain judgment respecting the constancy of the effect. Now in any such case, where do we look for the cause of a constant, uniform effect, but in the nature or constitution of the thing ? If this reasoning is substantially correct, what can be more proper than to call the sinfulness of man *natural, original, innate* ?

It might here be expected, that I should argue particularly from those texts, which teach directly that our sinfulness results from the original constitution of our nature ; from various maxims and rules of Scripture, implying a bias in human nature, which it is the object of Christian instruction and discipline to correct ; and particularly from the representations of the New Testament, that man has, by his natural birth, that carnal mind which is opposite to holiness, and on account of which he needs to be born again. But the arguments derived from these sources were distinctly brought to

view in my Letters to Unitarians; and I cheerfully leave it to the judgment of my readers, whether any thing has been offered to diminish their force.

I have now stated the leading considerations, which prove the depravity of man to be *native, natural, innate*. First. Moral depravity is as universal among men, as reason, memory, or the bodily senses, which are allowed by all to be natural. Second. Depravity shows itself very early; as early as could be expected, on the supposition that it is native; that is, at the earliest period of childhood to which our memory can reach in regard to ourselves, or in which children are able, by intelligible signs, to manifest their feelings to others. Third. The depravity of man cannot be traced to any calamity which befalls him, or to any change which takes place in his moral constitution, subsequently to his birth. Fourth. Moral depravity, like other native affections or principles of the mind, is spontaneous in its operations, and hard to be eradicated. Fifth. We can predict concerning any human being, as soon as born, that if he live long enough to exhibit the character of a moral agent, he will certainly be a sinner; and this power of prediction must depend on a settled, uniform cause, a law of our nature.

These, with the Scripture arguments alluded to, are, to say the least, as good reasons why we should believe moral depravity to be a *native, original attribute of man*, as any which Dr. Ware can have for believing "kindness, gratitude, and love of truth" to be so. I admit that these and other things of like kind, if taken with proper explanations, are as Dr. Ware represents them, *natural* properties of man. But let him tell us why they are to be considered as natural; and then we may see whether the reasons, which prove them to be natural, are stronger than those which prove human depravity to be so.

CHAPTER IV.

THE principal objections urged against the doctrine, which I attempted to defend in the preceding chapter, and the principal difficulties in which it is entangled, will now be made the subject of particular consideration.

Notwithstanding the universal prevalence of moral evil, and all the arguments which have been adduced to prove that it is *natural* to man, like those other appetites and affections which are, on both sides, regarded in this light; there are, it is said, special reasons against considering *moral evil* to be a natural property of man; reasons strong enough to countervail all the arguments in favour of the Orthodox doctrine. These reasons are, in brief, that *the doctrine of native depravity, is inconsistent with the moral attributes of God, and inconsistent with moral agency in man.* Objections like these are arrayed against the common doctrine of native depravity by Dr. Taylor, and many other writers, and are suggested by Dr. Ware in several passages in his Letters.

Here I must take the liberty to remark, as I remarked in my Letters to Unitarians, that the mode of reasoning, introduced by those who urge objections in this manner, is altogether unphilosophical, and can never be relied upon either in physics, ethics, or theology. The particular fault to which I refer in their mode of reasoning, is, that they consider a difficulty which they are not able to solve, as sufficient to disprove a doctrine, supported by clear and conclusive evidence. In the science of the mind, as well as in natural philosophy, the legitimate object of research is, as the most approved writers have abundantly shown, to discover what is *fact*;

not to determine what is *possible* or *consistent*. What would be thought of me, should I regulate my inquiries in natural philosophy by the principle involved in the mode of reasoning referred to? I start with a full belief of the common doctrine of philosophy, that all material substances have the power of attraction constantly operating with regard to each other; and I am resolved to admit nothing, which seems to me incapable of being reconciled with this. If in the progress of my inquiries I should find any thing, which seems to me inconsistent with the grand principle of attraction, I am predetermined not receive it into my creed. By and by facts occur, which indicate that, in certain cases, material substances have the power of *repulsion*. But as I am unable to see how this power can consist with the other, I will not believe its existence. Or if I admit the existence of *repulsion*, I will no longer admit *attraction*. Am I now a disciple of Newton? Or has my understanding gone back to the thralldom of the school-men? Governing myself by the same maxim, I attempt to learn the properties of the magnet. I am not satisfied with the simple inquiry, what properties do in fact belong to it? What do experience and observation show? With this I must join another inquiry;—how can such properties be compatible with each other? And how can I admit two different things, when I am not able to see their consistency? Such philosophizing as this would lead to results, for which few men would be willing to be responsible.

But the falsity of the mode of reasoning, above described, is no less obvious, in relation to the doctrine of depravity. The proper inquiry is, what is taught by the word of God, and by the facts which fall under our observation? I ought to come to this inquiry with a

mind as free from prepossession, as that with which a physician inquires, whether his patient exhibits the signs of a consumption. And if I find such proof that depravity naturally belongs to man, as satisfies me that any other properties of man are natural; I have come to the end of my inquiry. So far as my belief of the fact is concerned, I have nothing to do with the question, how this fact is consistent with the perfections of God, or with the moral agency of man, or with any thing else. I say not this, however, because I have the least reluctance to consider the question of consistency, in its proper place; but to show that, in our reasoning, the consideration of this is to be made entirely distinct from the consideration of the evidence, which proves the fact. If I would be either a philosopher or a Christian, I must believe what is clearly proved to be fact, whether I am able to reconcile the fact with other things I believe, or not. Nor must I in any case suffer my views of the clearness and competency of the proof, or my mode of coming to the discovery of it, to be influenced by any difficulty I may feel, as to the consistency of the fact to be proved with other facts. But I wish it to be remembered that I say all this, not because I suppose that two facts or truths, which are to be believed, may be really inconsistent with each other; but because, admitting that they are consistent, we may not in every case be under advantages to discover *how* they are consistent.

To come at a still clearer view of the error involved in that principle of reasoning, against which my objections have been aimed; suppose some philosopher should rise up and say, that my believing the power of repulsion to exist in matter is inconsistent with my believing the power of attraction; or should charge me with denying attraction, because I believe repulsion.

And suppose this pretended inconsistency of repulsion with attraction should be perpetually mentioned, or hinted at, as an argument proving conclusively, that matter can have no such property, as the power of repulsion. In reply to such sophistry I should say, first, that there is, in my view, no inconsistency at all between these two powers, and that, if any man affirms there is an inconsistency, the burden of proof certainly lies upon him. Secondly. A man's being unable to see the consistency of the two powers can be taken as no part of the proof of a real inconsistency. Thirdly. The question, whether there is such a thing as repulsion in matter, must depend entirely on its proper philosophical evidence, and must be discussed without any regard to the alleged inconsistency of repulsion with attraction. If repulsion is proved to exist by clear, conclusive evidence; I should be a child, and not a philosopher, to refuse it a place in my belief, because it is difficult to reconcile it with something else.

I entertain the same views of the proper mode of reasoning on the subject of man's natural depravity; and these views I exhibited in my fourth Letter, to which I beg leave particularly to refer the reader. After several remarks, intended to simplify the object of inquiry, I said; "These remarks are intended to show that according to the just principles of reasoning in such a case, we have nothing to do with the inquiry, whether the common doctrine of depravity can consist with the moral perfection of God, &c. If I say, this doctrine cannot be true, because I cannot reconcile it with the goodness of God; it is the same as saying, I am an infallible judge, and my opinion must stand, though opposed by the declarations of Scripture and the evidence of facts. To take such a position would be an effectual bar to convic-

tion, and render all reasoning useless. If we would regulate our investigations on this subject by correct principles, we must reject totally every prepossession against the doctrine of depravity, arising from the consideration of the divine perfections, or from any thing else, and must restrict ourselves to this single inquiry, *what is true in fact?* If the subject is one on which the Scripture undertakes to decide; the question is, *what saith the Scripture?*—If when we pursue our inquiry, we find that the Scripture, interpreted without the influence of any prepossession, and according to just rules, teaches that man is by nature unholy; this must unhesitatingly be admitted, as a certain truth. That God declares it, is proof enough.—If observation and experience teach the same truth; we are to admit it as doubly confirmed. As to the goodness of God, we know it from other evidence.”

Dr. Ware thinks the course I pursued in regard to this subject liable to objection. “This is certainly a very extraordinary thought,” he says, “that in defending his system against an objection to which it is thought liable, he should have nothing to do with the very objection itself, nor with the difficulty it involves. Did the question relate to the simple fact, whether the doctrine of depravity, as maintained by the Orthodox, were a doctrine of Scripture or not, its consistency or inconsistency with the moral perfections of God would indeed make no part of the ground on which the argument should proceed.” p. 12.

My reply to this, and to what stands connected with it, is a very easy one. The grand point at issue was and is, whether the Orthodox doctrine of depravity is true. I was aware that Mr. Channing and others had not made this the grand point at issue, and with a view to expose what I considered a mistake in them, and to

simplify the object of inquiry, I made the remarks in my fourth Letter. I represented that the great inquiry in relation to this subject ought to be ; “ Do the Scriptures, understood according to just rules of interpretation, teach the doctrine of native depravity ? ” Now if this were really to be made the chief topic of inquiry, Dr. Ware himself allows, that “ the consistency or inconsistency of the doctrine with the moral perfections of God would indeed make no part of the ground, on which the argument should proceed. ” The fact was, that it had often been mentioned, as a decisive reason against believing the doctrine of depravity, that it is inconsistent with the moral perfection of God. If an *appearance* of such inconsistency had been mentioned merely as a difficulty attending an important Scripture doctrine ; the case would have been different. But its absolute inconsistency with the divine perfections had been urged, as conclusively disproving the truth of the doctrine. I undertook to show that such a mode of reasoning is altogether unphilosophical, and that it would be seen to be so in other like cases. And I now say again, that what I have represented to be the grand inquiry is not to be shackled with any other matters. If indeed, after we have proved from legitimate sources of evidence, that man is by nature depraved, any one choose to bring into view the difficulty of reconciling the doctrine with the divine perfections ; I will be so far from attempting to evade the difficulty, that I will apply myself with all possible diligence and care, to solve it. And this I shall actually do, in some measure, before leaving the subject. But after all, be it remembered, that, whether I succeed in solving the difficulty or not, the ground of my faith in the doctrine is the same. I believe it, because it is taught in the Scriptures ; just as the philosopher be-

believes what thorough investigation shows to be fact, whether he finds himself able to reconcile it with other facts, or not.

But Dr. Ware insists, p. 12, 13, that it certainly does belong to him, who would relieve the Orthodox system from the imputation of being inconsistent with the divine perfections, to prove that it is consistent. For the sake of elucidating more fully the principle of reasoning under consideration, I will allow, for the present, that it does belong to me to prove this consistency. And I will give in few words, the nature of the proof which I now have to offer. Let then the alleged inconsistency appear ever so great, even as great, and as hard to be removed, as Unitarians suppose ; I shall consider it as valid evidence of a real consistency, if I show by proper arguments, first, *that God possesses moral perfection* ; and secondly, *that man is by nature depraved*. I am speaking now of the kind of proof that is to be relied upon, not attempting to exhibit the proof at full length. Suppose each of the two positions, just stated, to be supported by suitable evidence. I adduce the simple fact, that *both positions are shown to be true*, as *satisfactory proof of their real consistency with each other*. In many cases, this may be the only possible method of proof ; because we may not be able to bring the two things together by a direct comparison, and in that way to show that they are consistent with each other. This principle is much used in Geometry. In some cases where we cannot compare two things together so as to prove their agreement with each other directly, we compare them both with a third, and by making out their agreement with that, we prove their agreement with each other. Their agreement with the third is the medium of proof. So in the case under consider-

ation. Even if we could do nothing, by a direct comparison of the two positions, towards proving a mutual consistency ; the fact that each of them is shown by proper evidence to be true, must be taken as evidence that they are consistent. This is the only way in which a thousand things in physics, and in the philosophy of the mind, can ever be proved to be consistent with each other ; and it is the only way in which men, who are completely disentangled from the hypothetical philosophy, deem it necessary to attempt a proof.

But Dr. Ware shows at the end of Letter II, that he is of a very different opinion, as to this principle of reasoning. He says, that *I have contented myself with endeavouring to prove the doctrines of Orthodoxy, as matters of fact, upon the principle, that if I could clearly prove them to be doctrines of Scriptures, I should not be bound to show how they can be consistent with the divine perfections.* He signifies his disapprobation of all this, and declares that, as I have proceeded thus, *it is unnecessary to say any thing more to show, that the imputation of our holding doctrines inconsistent with the divine perfections is not removed.* To this remarkable passage I request the reader to give some close attention. The principle on which I proceeded in my reasoning, as Dr. Ware here observes, was this ; that if I could clearly prove our doctrines to be matters of fact, and doctrines of Scripture, I should not be bound to show, in any other way, how they can be consistent with the divine perfections. Now he says, as I have contented myself with an attempt made according to this principle, the imputation of our holding opinions inconsistent with the divine perfections remains ; that is to say ; my having clearly proved our doctrines to be doctrines of Scripture, if I had done it. would not be enough

to prove them consistent with the divine perfections ;— for this is the same as his saying, that my having clearly proved our doctrines to be doctrines of Scripture would not remove the imputation of our holding doctrines inconsistent with the divine perfections ; and this is the same as to say, that, for aught we know, the Scriptures may contain doctrines inconsistent with the divine perfections. I should be sorry to think, that this is the ground-work of Dr. Ware's reasoning on this subject. But it really is so, unless he is so unfortunate as not to express what he intends ; or unless I am so unfortunate as to misinterpret his language. But truly I see not how I could avoid the conclusion above stated. For if the principle on which he says I proceeded, and on which I indeed meant to proceed, that if I could clearly prove our doctrines to be doctrines of Scripture, we should be free from the imputation of holding doctrines inconsistent with the divine perfections,—if this principle is to be rejected ; it must be because the Bible may contain doctrines inconsistent with those perfections. Only let us agree in the position, that the Bible teaches nothing really inconsistent with the divine perfections ; then, of course, my proving the doctrines in question to be doctrines of Scripture would be considered as removing every pretence, that I hold doctrines inconsistent with those perfections. I know indeed that Dr. Ware did not mean to admit that I had proved our doctrines to be taught in the Bible. But what he says manifestly implies, that if I had proved this, and proved it clearly, and had done no more, I should still be chargeable with holding doctrines inconsistent with the perfections of God ; for this was the imputation, which he says would not be removed.—

As this subject is of very great consequence in the regulation of our religious inquiries in general, and as my wish is to make it perfectly intelligible to every reader; I beg leave to exhibit my views in a varied form.

The positions which I have laboured to establish, as the regulating principles of our reasoning, and of our faith, particularly on this subject, are these. 1. The grand inquiry, and in truth the only inquiry is, what is taught by the word of God? 2. Though the Scriptures contain doctrines which may, to some, have an appearance of being inconsistent with the divine perfections; they contain none which are inconsistent in reality. 3. As soon as any doctrine is clearly proved to be a doctrine of Scripture, it is, for that reason alone, entitled to our faith; and even if we should entirely fail of showing its consistency with the divine perfections, or with moral agency, to the satisfaction of an objector; we could not, on that account, be justly charged with holding a doctrine inconsistent with the divine perfections. But Dr. Ware's representation is, that as the Orthodox are charged with denying the moral perfection of God, or with holding doctrines inconsistent with it; the very point at issue is, whether our doctrines are inconsistent with the divine perfections; and that it was my business in this controversy, to prove them to be consistent. For the sake of clearing away this perplexity, as satisfactorily as possible, I will, for the present, admit these views of Dr. Ware to be correct, and will undertake the task of giving the proof demanded. But I claim the right of choosing my own method of proof. And for the purpose of trying the principle, I do now choose to make use of this method, and to rely upon this method alone; that is, *to prove that our doctrines are in*

fact consistent with the perfections of God, by proving them to be doctrines of his word. Will Dr. Ware allow this method of proof to be valid, and satisfactory? If so, he must alter the close of his second Letter. But if not, I ask why? Let him offer any reason whatever, to show that this method of proof would not be valid; and then see if the reason offered does not clearly imply, that the Scriptures may contain doctrines inconsistent with the divine perfections.

Should Dr. Ware say, as he has said, that he by no means admits that I have proved the doctrines of Orthodoxy to be doctrines of Scripture, and so that I have made out no such proof as this of their consistency with the divine perfections; I should make this obvious reply. The thing now under consideration is the *principle* of reasoning, not the *success* of it. The present question is not, whether I have actually proved our doctrines to be doctrines of Scripture; but whether, *if I should do this*, though I should then stop, it would be a sufficient proof, that our doctrines are consistent with the perfections of God; or whether, after clearly proving them to be doctrines of Scripture, the imputation might still lie against me of holding doctrines inconsistent with the divine perfections, because I did not in any other way, show, nor attempt "to show, how they can be consistent."

But possibly, after all that has been said, Dr. Ware's real meaning may not be what I have understood from his language; and he may on reflection, cheerfully accede to the principle of reasoning which I have been labouring to establish. The principle is this; and if the word of God is true, it will stand forever; namely; that clearly proving any doctrines to be doctrines of Scripture, is, by itself, a satisfactory proof of their con-

sistency with the divine perfections ; that in this controversy, the simple inquiry should be, *what do the Scriptures teach ?* and that in pursuing this inquiry, and in estimating the value of evidence which bears upon it, we ought not to be influenced by any apprehension, that the doctrines in question are inconsistent with the character of God, nor by any appearance of such inconsistency ;—just as we should pursue the inquiry, whether there has in reality been a general deluge, without any regard to the question, whether we are able to show such a fact to be consistent with the character of God. From this principle it would follow, that if any man finds, in regard to the doctrines of Orthodoxy, that he has been influenced by an appearance or apprehension of their inconsistency with the divine perfections, and that in this way he has been prepossessed against those doctrines, and has refused to be convinced of their truth by evidence, which would be satisfactory in other cases ; it is high time for him to inquire, whether he has not done violence to the principles of reasoning, and whether he is not in danger of wandering irreclaimably from the path of divine truth. He forgets that such short-sighted creatures, as we are, may, in a thousand cases, be unable to see *how* things can be consistent, which really are so ; and that we may think we see an inconsistency, when, if we had a greater extent or clearness of vision, we might see none. While he rejects a doctrine, which is supported by such evidence as is generally deemed sufficient, because he is unable to see how the doctrine can consist with something else ; he places a reliance upon the strength of his understanding, to which it is not entitled, and opens the door for a wide-spreading skepticism ; and he does this in relation to doctrines, which are of the

highest importance, and the truth of which is shown by evidence of noon-day clearness.

Under the influence of such mistaken views, as those just alluded to, a philosopher examines the proof of a general deluge, and finds it clear and strong. But he determines not to believe it, because he cannot see *how* it could have been consistent with the justice and goodness of God, to destroy a world by a deluge. You tell him, it is clearly taught in the Bible, which he professes to receive as the word of God, and that it ought, on that account alone, to be believed, whatever difficulties may seem to attend it. But he avers, with increasing warmth of feeling, that it is totally inconsistent with the goodness of God, who is the Father of his creatures; "that we can make no supposition upon the ground of which we shall be able to see that it can be consistent;" that it ought therefore to be rejected; and that the few texts of Scripture which seem to favour it, must be explained in some other way, so that they may give no support to a fact, which "certainly admits of no reconciliation with any notion we can have of the moral perfection of the Author of our being."

The same philosopher casts his eye over the destruction of Sodom by fire from heaven, and of Jerusalem by the Roman army. His sensibilities are shocked by the idea of such scenes of distress and desolation. That God should visit so great a multitude of people, old and young, including so many thousands of harmless infants, with such overwhelming judgments, seems totally irreconcilable with his paternal character. Our philosopher, who feels for his fellow-creatures, cannot think, that a Being of infinite compassion could ever have taken pleasure in witnessing so awful an event, brought about too by his own agency. And though the evidence from history is

such as would satisfy him in other cases, he thinks it cannot be satisfactory in this, as it would involve us in the belief of a fact, so inconsistent with the moral perfection of God. So far as the Bible is concerned, instead of openly rejecting its authority, he goes about to put such a sense upon it, as he thinks it ought to have. He claims the right of proceeding in this way from one subject to another, and of rejecting or modifying any texts of Scripture, so that they may not oppose the notion which he has suffered to preoccupy his mind, in regard to the character of God. He seems to see that the common doctrines of depravity, atonement, election, regeneration, and the endless punishment of the wicked are incapable of being reconciled with the divine perfections. According to his maxim, therefore, these doctrines must all be rejected; and the Bible must be so explained, as to give them no support.

Now the foundation of such a philosopher's reasoning is just this: He has more confidence in his own preconceptions, than in the word of God. While he ought to guide his reason by the dictates of revelation; he labours to conform the dictates of revelation to the hasty judgments of reason. See how clearly and strongly the Scriptures assert the natural corruption of man. If with half the clearness and strength they asserted his native purity, how would Unitarians glory in the firm foundation of their faith? But no sooner does the word of God begin to assert man's native depravity, than it has to encounter a strong preconception, that the doctrine cannot consist with God's moral perfection, and cannot be true. Our opponents think that the Scriptures do not teach the doctrine. But would they think so, were they not biassed by a preconception against the doctrine? And must it not be evident even to themselves, that such a

preconception is likely to prevent all fair and impartial investigation of the evidence which supports the doctrine? How can there be a fair investigation of the meaning of Scripture by those, who have prejudged what its meaning must, or must not be? Is it not obvious, that they judge differently in regard to other doctrines, against which their prejudices are not arrayed? Is not evidence of inferior clearness perfectly satisfactory on a thousand other subjects? But here, according to the maxims which govern our opponents, it seems utterly impossible they should ever be convinced. Let the Scriptures say what they will; let them assert the doctrine of native depravity, and the other doctrines allied to it, in language ever so plain, and in circumstances which show, according to all just rules of interpretation, what the sense must be; and let it appear from the conduct of the writers, and from what they exhibited of their own feelings, that they did actually regard these doctrines, as divine truths; it still answers no purpose with our opponents. For they meet all this with the argument, that these doctrines can never be reconciled with the moral perfections of God. Viewing the doctrines in this light, and entertaining this strong prepossession against them, they can receive no result of experience, and no declaration of Scripture, as conclusive evidence of their truth. I say then, that so long as they suffer that notion of inconsistency to occupy their minds, and to control their faith; it is perfectly idle to cite the Scriptures as evidence. If Paul himself were here, and should declare the doctrines, as we understand them, to be according to truth; they would even then reject them. Just so far as their maxim is adopted, the authority of the Bible is given up, and the discussion proceeds on the ground of mere natural rea-

son. And even after it has been clearly proved that any particular doctrines are taught in the Bible ; we must still inquire at the oracle of reason, whether those doctrines are worthy to be received.

I am aware that presenting the reasoning of our opponents in this light may be thought to savour but little of candour. But truly, I think they will not hesitate to acknowledge, that so far as the exercise of candour is concerned, I can justify myself by appealing to the standard which they themselves have established. For if it is consistent with candour for them to charge us with denying the moral perfection of God, or with holding sentiments implying such a denial ; why should I be thought deficient in candour for endeavouring, according to my serious conviction, to show, that they entertain sentiments, or adopt a mode of reasoning, which involves the denial of the truth and authority of the Scriptures ?

The same remarks apply to the other part of the objection against the evidence of native depravity ; namely ; that it cannot be admitted to be conclusive, because the doctrine is inconsistent with moral agency. But without repeating these remarks, I will just say, that it is altogether as proper for me to deny man's moral agency on account of its apparent inconsistency with the doctrine of depravity, as for others to deny man's depravity, on account of its apparent inconsistency with moral agency.

Let it not however be supposed, from any of the foregoing remarks, that I wish to discountenance direct and free inquiry respecting the consistency of our doctrine of depravity with the moral perfection of God ; or that I think there is no other way of meeting the objection under consideration, than the one I have thus far

pursued. I must, however, view this as sufficient. And whether I succeed or not in my attempt to show, by another mode of reasoning, that the doctrine of depravity is reconcileable with the moral perfection of God and the moral agency of man, I shall consider the doctrine as worthy of unhesitating belief, if it has no support but this, which is indeed the best support of all,—that it is taught in the holy Scriptures.

Nor let it be supposed from the foregoing remarks, that I apprehend any peculiar difficulty in showing the consistency of native depravity with the divine perfections. There is certainly no contradiction in the terms; that is, the proposition which affirms the native depravity of man, does not, in the terms of it, contain a denial of the perfection of God. The inconsistency, if there is any, must be made to appear by an investigation of *the subject*. If Dr. Ware soberly thinks that there is an inconsistency; he ought not to content himself with such a bare assertion of it, as is suited to make an impression on those, who will not give themselves the trouble of thinking, or to excite prejudice in those who are governed by sounds, and first appearances. It behoves him to support his charge of inconsistency by substantial evidence. But it cannot surely be considered, as having any thing of the nature of evidence, for him to say, *that we can make no supposition upon which we shall be able to perceive the consistency between natural depravity and the divine goodness, or that the doctrine of native depravity certainly admits of no reconciliation with any notion we can have of the moral perfection of God*. These are strong affirmations, and doubtless sincere ones, expressing the real conviction of the writer. But he cannot expect us to receive them, as arguments. Should I think it best to make affirmations in the same way, expressive of *my*

views on this subject ; I should say, in direct opposition to what has just been quoted from our Author, that there is a very plain supposition, upon which we are able to perceive the perfect consistency of native depravity and divine goodness ; and this supposition is, that the existence of man, with such a nature or character as we ascribe to him, may, in the administration of a perfect moral government, be made ultimately conducive to the great end of benevolence, that is, the happiness of the universe. Or I should say thus ; that man's native depravity is not in the least inconsistent with divine *justice*, if it be so that man, notwithstanding his native depravity, never suffers more than what he truly deserves for his own personal sins ;—not inconsistent with divine *goodness*, if man's depravity is made an effectual means of promoting the object, at which goodness aims ;—and not inconsistent with *wisdom*, if the system, of which man's depravity is a part, is so contrived, that it is suited to promote the best end in the best manner.

But although, in this brief statement, I have made a supposition, according to which the native depravity of man must appear perfectly reconcileable with God's moral perfections ; I shall not stop here ; but shall proceed, once for all, freely to investigate this subject, and to inquire, whether there is any force in the objection, so often and so triumphantly repeated, that the doctrine of native depravity is totally inconsistent with the moral perfection of God, and can, on no supposition whatever, be reconciled with it.

What then do my opponents mean by saying, that any thing is inconsistent with the moral perfection of God ? that is, with his benevolence, or goodness ? Most obviously they must mean, that if that doctrine is true, or if that event takes place, God cannot be good ; in

other words, that he cannot have benevolent feelings, or he cannot pursue the end of a benevolent administration. It is clear that the end of true benevolence, whether in feeling or in action, is to do good, or to promote real happiness. And if the being who possesses perfect benevolence, has also an infinite understanding, and is capable of comprehending a vast system of intelligent beings, which extends to eternity ; the object of his benevolence must be the happiness of such a system—the highest degree of happiness of which that system is capable, taken in its whole extent and duration. Now the native depravity of man is plainly consistent with the divine benevolence, if it is, on the whole, consistent with the greatest good of the intelligent system. Do you ask how it can possibly be made consistent ? My answer is, it may, in one way or another, be the means of making a brighter and more diversified display of the divine perfections, and thus of giving the intelligent creation, as a whole, a higher knowledge and enjoyment of God. It may be the means of illustrating more clearly the excellence of the law and government of God, and of producing ultimately, through his moral kingdom, a purer and more ardent attachment to his character, and his administration ; so that his intelligent creatures, by means of the instruction and discipline in this way afforded, may be brought at length to a state of higher perfection and enjoyment, than they could attain in any other way. Through the vigilant wisdom and justice of civil rulers, such a happy result of rebellion sometimes appears in human governments. And why may it not be so in the divine government, which is directed by wisdom and justice infinitely more vigilant, and controlled by power infinitely more efficacious, than any human government ? If in the ways here suggested, or in other ways, the de-

pravity of man may be made to subserve the end of the divine administration; its existence is plainly consistent with the divine goodness; or, which is the same thing, it may exist, and yet God show himself to be infinitely good. The subject of native depravity is, in this respect, explained on the same principle with that of moral evil generally. If you ask, how the existence of moral evil can be consistent with the moral perfections of God; you ask a question of as difficult solution as the one we have been considering; and the proper answer to it must, in my view, be the same.

But has any thing ever taken place under the divine administration, which in any degree illustrates this subject? Are there any facts which tend to show, that the solution I have given of the difficulty, is conformable to truth, and ought to be satisfactory?

In reply to this, I refer the reader to all the instances recorded in the Scriptures, and all which have occurred in the common course of divine providence, in which the sins of men have been made the occasion of glory to God, and of good to his kingdom. These instances press upon our notice from every quarter. But I shall content myself with suggesting one or two of those which are most remarkable. No one will think it strange, that I should here mention the case of the Egyptian king; which I do, not because it is a case essentially different from others, but because the Scriptures make it a subject of particular remark, and give an explanation of it, which fully confirms the general principle involved in my reasoning. In a passage too weighty to be overlooked, and in language too plain to be misunderstood, God himself expressly informs us of the very purpose for which he raised that wicked man to the throne of Egypt. *Exod. ix. 16.* Was not the purpose which

in that case God had in view, and which he actually accomplished, a benevolent purpose? And were not all the means he employed, consistent with his moral perfections? And can any thing be clearer, than that the principal means employed was the diversified display the Egyptian monarch made of the most impious pride, and the most unrelenting hardness of heart? It is utterly in vain to attempt an enumeration of the instances, more or less remarkable, in which the sinful passions and actions of man have been made to praise God. The work of redemption exhibits this wonderful subserviency of moral evil to a benevolent end, with the greatest possible clearness. All those acts of God in the salvation of men, which are "to the praise of the glory of his grace," and all the songs of thanksgiving among the redeemed in heaven, are occasioned by human transgression. And a careful examination of this subject will show not only the fact, that moral evil is so overruled by the divine hand, as to be made actually subservient to the end of benevolence, but something of the *manner* in which it is done. I will only add here, that in regard to this subserviency of evil to good, there can be no distinction between moral evil generally, and that moral evil which is *native*. For if moral evil, occurring at *any* period of man's life, may be made to contribute to the end of a benevolent administration; why may not that which occurs at the earliest period?

Such, in brief, are my views, as to the actual consistency of man's native depravity with the divine perfections. I turn now to the objector, who thinks native depravity to be inconsistent with the divine perfections. Let him tell me definitely, *why* it is inconsistent. Because man, from the first of his existence as a moral agent, is sinful, does God cease to be good? May not God so overrule the corruption of our nature, that, in the final result of

his administration, it shall be the occasion of a brighter display of his holiness, and an augmentation of happiness in his universal empire? Cannot Omnipotence bring good out of evil in this case, as well as in others? How does it appear, that the moral perfection of God must necessarily preclude the existence of sin in man, at the commencement of his moral agency? Will the objector say, that *native* sinfulness, if it should exist, must of necessity be attributed to the *immediate agency* of God, and that this would make him the cause of moral evil in a sense, obviously inconsistent with his infinite holiness? I would request the objector, before adopting such a conclusion, to allow himself time for a little free inquiry.—Does not moral evil actually exist? Are not all men sinners? If so, then it must be allowed by both parties, that moral evil has a *beginning* in men. It is true, indeed, that Unitarians differ from us as to the time of its beginning. But when we assert that man is a sinner, or begins to sin, as soon as he is a moral agent, we no more attribute sin to the immediate agency of God, than those do, who assert that sin begins at any subsequent period. Show me how sin may begin to exist at any period of man's life, without implying an agency of God inconsistent with his holiness; and I will show you how it may begin to exist at the earliest period, without implying any such agency? If you say that sin, when it exists in mature age, is the free, unconstrained action of a rational and accountable being, and that all its guilt is chargeable upon him, and not upon God; I say the same respecting that sin, which we suppose belongs to man at his first existence. It is the act of a rational, accountable being; an act as free and unconstrained as any which takes place during his whole life; and none the less free and unconstrained, because for a time it

may begin and end in the affections,—the circumstances of the case not permitting it to show itself outwardly in a visible form. This is true of a thousand sins, of which men are guilty in every period of their life; sins which exist merely in the affections of the mind, and are visible only to the eye of conscience, and of God. Now I think it manifest, that between the affections found in a state of manhood, and those in early childhood, there is no difference as to their *nature*, though there is a vast difference as to their *strength*. Nor can there be any difference, as to the degree in which a child, and a person of mature age, is dependent on God in the exercise of his affections. From infancy to old age, man is in the highest degree dependent. He always lives, and moves, and has his being in God. The first movements of his moral nature, which must of necessity be affections merely, have precisely the same relation to the divine agency, as any moral affections afterwards. If God can create a being, who shall, at any time, be the subject of feelings and actions of a moral nature, or who shall, at any time, be a free, accountable agent; he can, if he please, create one who shall be a free, moral, accountable agent *from the beginning*. Suppose the first moral feelings and actions of such a being to be sinful; are they not still his own feelings and actions, for which he is justly accountable? With regard to the agency of God, it is evident that no difficulty attends that moral evil which begins thus early, and is therefore called native, more than attends that which originates at any subsequent period. Or to express it in another form; if God can, consistently with his holiness, create and preserve an intelligent being, who shall be a sinner at any period of his life; he can create and preserve one who shall be a sinner from the beginning. With respect to

the perfections and the agency of God, there appears no difference between the supposition that moral evil begins at the commencement of man's existence, and the supposition that it begins at a subsequent period, unless there is some *intrinsic* absurdity or difficulty in supposing it to begin so early. If there is any such absurdity or difficulty, it must relate to the subject of moral agency. It is then important to inquire, whether the doctrine of native depravity is inconsistent with a right view of moral agency. This inquiry will be pursued in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

Is THE doctrine of native depravity inconsistent with moral agency?

It seems to be frequently taken for granted by Dr. Ware, as well as by Dr. Taylor, and others, that man becomes a moral agent in consequence of an *antecedent* course of voluntary action; and particularly, that he becomes a *sinner* by a course of misconduct, which *precedes* his being a sinner. Dr. Ware says, pp. 33, 36, 37, that men become sinners by yielding to temptations—by obeying the impulse of the passions and the calls of appetite, in opposition to the direction of reason and the notices of conscience,—by subjecting themselves to the dominion of the inferior part of their nature,—by the abuse of God's gifts, &c. But does he mean to say, that all this conduct takes place, *before men become sinners*? Then he means to say, that they commit as great sins *before* they are sinners, as *after*. For what worse can real sinners do, than “yielding to temptation—obeying the im-

pulse of the passions in opposition to reason and conscience, subjecting themselves to the inferior part of their nature, and abusing God's gifts?" Or does Dr. Ware mean only to say, that these are the ways in which they manifest and increase their sinfulness? If so, his meaning is doubtless correct. It is certainly *sin*, for men to do the things above mentioned; and in the very act of doing them, they are *sinner*s.

But the question returns, whether native depravity is inconsistent with moral agency. There is no way to answer this satisfactorily, but by getting clear ideas of moral agency, as well as of native depravity, and then determining, by a careful comparison, whether they are repugnant to each other. What then is moral agency? Or to make the question more convenient, what is a *moral agent*? Answer. A moral agent is one who acts under a moral law, and is justly accountable for his conduct. Now we find it to be the opinion of Dr. Ware, pp. 21, 41, that "by their natural birth men become *reasonable, accountable* beings." This is as much as to say, they become *moral agents*. And if they are moral agents, they are capable of moral action; that is, capable of holiness and sin; as Dr. Ware often represents them to be. But if they are *capable* of sin, there is no absurdity in supposing that they may actually be the subjects of sin; and that they may be the subjects of sin, as soon as they are moral agents. In one place, which I have already noticed, Dr. Ware says boldly, they are so. In explaining the phrase, "All have sinned," he says it means, "all who are capable of sinning, all as soon as they are capable of it, all as soon as they are *moral agents*." For the assistance which these passages afford, I am under particular obligations to Dr. Ware. If these statements of his are correct, as I am persuaded

they are ; there can be no inconsistency between native depravity and moral agency. Our Author seems here to rise to the highest point of Orthodoxy ; for he says, first, that “all who are capable of sinning,—all who are moral agents, are sinners ; and that they are sinners *as soon* as they are capable of sinning, or *as soon as they are moral agents.*” And secondly, he says, that “men are reasonable, accountable beings,” that is, moral agents, and of course capable of sin,—“by their natural birth.” All, by their natural birth, are moral agents, and as soon as they are moral agents, they are sinners ;—*moral agents by nature, and sinners as soon as moral agents.* To this representation of Dr. Ware I fully accede ; nor do I believe that any man can perceive in it the least absurdity or inconsistency.

The great question with many is, how children can be capable of sin at so early a stage of their existence, as is supposed. But if God has made them moral agents ; if from the first he has constituted them “reasonable, accountable beings ;” or if they are such “by their natural birth,” as Dr. Ware expresses it ; are they not of course capable of sin from the first ? They must be as really capable of sin at the commencement of their moral existence, as at any subsequent period. If the objector denies this, then let him tell me how it can be, that men become more truly capable of sin, after they have been moral agents for some time, than when they *begin* to be moral agents. I speak not here, as to the *degree* of capability, but the *reality* of it. If at the commencement of moral existence, men are not as really capable of sin, as afterwards ; it must be because they are not really moral agents. And if they are not really moral agents, it must be because they have not the properties which are essential to moral agency. But Dr. Ware asserts

that they have these properties *by nature* ; so that I have no controversy with him on this subject.

But if men, at the beginning of their existence, are not really moral agents ; the present discussion has nothing to do with them at that period ; for the very question, whether they are the subjects of moral evil, manifestly implies that they are capable of moral evil. I make it no part of my object in this discussion, to determine precisely the time, when moral agency begins. There are difficulties in the way of such a determination, which I feel myself wholly unable to surmount. My position is, that as soon as men are moral agents, they are sinners. Dr. Ware's limitation of the universal expression, "all have sinned," p. 44, is undoubtedly just. It seems to me as unreasonable and absurd to say, that human beings are really sinners before they are moral agents, as to say that birds or fishes are sinners. Dr. Ware's position is mine, that *men are sinners as soon as they are moral agents*.

But I wish to take a still nearer and more particular view of this point. Let me say then, that if men at first, have a low degree of moral agency, or a low and feeble degree of those faculties which constitute them moral agents, as we find the case actually is ; they must be sinners in a correspondent degree. This view of the subject appears to me perfectly reasonable. Men have by nature the constitution—they have all the faculties, essential to moral agency. But at first they have them in a small degree. Of course they are in a small degree accountable creatures—in a small degree capable of sin ; and if they are really sinners, they must be so only in the same degree. According to this view, there must be the same difference between men of mature age and little children in regard to their sinfulness, as there

is in regard to their intellectual and moral powers. In early childhood, there is only the feeble dawn of reason and conscience ; only the commencement, and that almost imperceptible, of intellectual and moral faculties, and of moral agency—much like the commencement of corporeal powers and corporeal action in infancy. As childhood advances, the light of reason and conscience waxes brighter ; the intellectual and moral powers gradually increase, till they come to a good degree of strength. Now reason and observation lead us to think it is so, in regard to moral evil. In early childhood, there is a small and almost imperceptible beginning of sinful affection, a beginning exactly corresponding to the feeble dawn of reason and conscience, and to the incipient state of moral agency. After this, sinful affection and action gradually increase with the increasing strength of the intellectual and moral faculties, till they rise to their ultimate state. Is there any thing incredible in all this ? Is it not fully confirmed by the actual appearances of human nature from infancy to mature age, as well as by the representations of Scripture ?

But our attention is called to another view of the subject. In regard to moral agency, as well as many other subjects, Dr. Ware seems to agree with Dr. John Taylor, who invests his opinions and arguments with such charms of genius and taste, as are found in few writers of any age. Dr. Ware p. 20, represents man as without either sin or holiness, until he has, by *the exercise of his faculties*, actually formed a character either good or bad." He must mean an exercise of the faculties which *precedes* the existence of either sin or holiness. In another place, he seems fond of representing, that *men make themselves sinners* ; which, connected as it is, must mean, that they are not sinners before they make themselves

so, and that the effort, or the exercise of their faculties, whatever it may be, by which they *make themselves sinners*, takes place *before* they are in any degree the subjects of sin. For it would hardly be to his purpose to say, that men *make themselves sinners* by an exercise of their faculties, after they have become sinners ; though he might very justly affirm, that they make themselves *more and more sinful* in that way.

This then, if I mistake not, is Dr. Ware's theory, as it seems to be of many celebrated writers ; namely ; that men make themselves sinners, or bring themselves into a state of sinfulness, or form a sinful disposition in themselves, by an exercise of their powers, or a course of voluntary action, which is antecedent to the first existence of sin in them. It is most certainly Dr. Ware's meaning, that the exercise or course of action, by which men make themselves sinners, precedes the first existence of sin in them ; because it is his object to account for the fact, that men first become sinners ; and we should not expect that he would ascribe the *commencement* or *origin* of moral evil in mankind to an exercise of their faculties, which takes place *after* that same moral evil has begun to exist. His theory then is, that before men have any taint of sin, they go through an exercise of their faculties, or a course of action, which results in sin, or by which they make themselves sinners.

The difficulties, with which this theory is encumbered, I have before hinted at. But I shall now set them before the reader more particularly and fully.

1. When Dr. Ware, in stating this theory, speaks of "the exercise of the faculties," he must mean those faculties of moral agents, which he thinks men possess by their natural birth. I ask then, whether they can exercise those faculties, without being in

fact moral agents ; or in other words, without exercising their moral agency ? My next question is, how they can be moral agents, and perform the actions, or have the feelings of moral agents, and yet have neither holiness nor sin ? If they are moral agents, they are accountable to God. Accountable for what ? Why, according to one part of Dr. Ware's scheme, accountable for an exercise of the faculties, which is neither holy nor sinful ; not *holy*, for if it were holy, it surely could not be the way in which men "make themselves sinners ;"—and not sinful, because, according to this scheme, sin begins to exist as its *consequence*, not as its attribute, or attendant circumstance. If then this theory is true, moral agents, who are of course accountable to God, are, in this case, accountable for an exercise of their powers, which is neither holy nor sinful. What does such accountability amount to ? Further. If they are moral agents, their actions have a relation to a moral law, and so must be conformed or not conformed, obedience or disobedience. But here is an exercise of faculties or a course of action in moral agents, which partakes neither of obedience nor disobedience. What then is its relation to law ? And of what account is it in a moral view ?

But I have another question ; namely ; how can such an exercise of the faculties, or such a course of action, as is supposed by Dr. Ware, produce the effect attributed to it ? How can actions, which *precede* the *existence* of moral evil, and so have in them nothing of the nature of moral evil, tend to produce moral evil, as their result ? Was there ever any thing like this in the history of the human mind ? that is, that a rational, voluntary exercise should produce an effect, of an entirely different nature from itself ? The exercise of reason may produce an improvement of reason, or may excite a rational affection.

The exercise of any perverse, corrupt passion may increase the strength of that passion, and tend to bring the mind under its influence. But show me any fact in human nature, which can lead us to think, that actions, in no degree sinful, will produce sin. In the case before us, why should they produce sin, rather than holiness? Have they, or has the mind in which they exist, any tendency to sin, rather than to holiness? But this would be contrary to Dr. Ware's scheme, as exhibited, p. 20, 21, and elsewhere. Does sin, then, rather than holiness, result from those actions, by *chance*, that is, without any thing in them, which can be a cause of this result, rather than of another? If so, then the task still lies on Dr. Ware's hands, of accounting by some adequate cause, for the first existence of moral evil in the human mind.

The difficulties I have now suggested, though quickly disposed of by men of superficial understanding, will not easily be passed over by those, who are accustomed to close and patient investigation. Dr. Ware attributes the first existence of sin in the individuals of our race, to a certain exercise of their rational faculties, or a certain course of voluntary action, as its cause. I can well enough perceive that, according to the known laws of the human mind, the exercise of the faculties will strengthen the faculties, and that any course of voluntary action will strengthen and confirm all those dispositions which it involves. But here is a scheme quite different; not that the faculties of the mind, not that the moral dispositions acquire strength by exercise, nor that intellectual and moral habits are in this way generated, or confirmed; but that an exercise of the faculties, or a course of action, which has not the smallest degree of any thing sinful in it, is yet the cause which produces sin, or the very way in which men first *make themselves sinners*. I

ask for facts, plain, obvious facts, which men have been conscious of in themselves or witnessed in others, to establish this theory. I can indeed readily admit, that children and men may exercise their faculties for some time, before they make a particular disposition or trait of character, which belongs to them, manifest to others. This may be owing to the weakness of the disposition, or to the absence of those causes, which would excite it in any sensible degree and give it a visible form, or to the influence of causes which lead to a studied concealment. But in all such cases, the disposition exists—actually exists, though in a low and invisible degree. Motives excite it. Exercise strengthens it. Occasions give it form, and bring it out to view. But according to the settled constitution of human nature, no motives, no exercise of the mind, no occasions can ever produce a *new* moral disposition or affection, that is to say, one which does not in some way already belong to the mind. They can no more do this, than they can produce a new intellectual faculty, or a new bodily appetite.—It is readily granted, that motives and occasions may produce a new modification of a moral disposition, or a new combination of different dispositions, and in that way may originate a new form of affection, so that a new name will become necessary ; as a man, who has a spirit of selfishness lurking within him, may, at one time, be placed in circumstances, which will give his selfishness the form of pride or vanity ; at another time, the form of covetousness ; at another time, the form of envy or revenge. But the general nature of pride, vanity, avarice, envy and revenge is involved in that selfishness, which before lurked in the mind, and which may be considered as the original affection. In all these cases, there is nothing new in its nature. The disposition, which is excited in

a course of voluntary action, is one which before existed either in the same form, or in a different one. But Dr. Ware's scheme is very diverse from this. He undertakes to account for the *origin* of a sinful disposition, by an exercise of the faculties, in which that disposition is in no sense involved. Let Dr. Ware prove, that there is any connexion between such a cause and such an effect.

Before leaving this part of Dr. Ware's scheme, take one short view of it. He undertakes to account for the first existence of sin in individuals of the human race. But how does he account for it? He says, *they make themselves sinners*, and that they do it *by yielding to temptation, by obeying the impulse of passion in opposition to reason and conscience, and by subjecting themselves to the dominion of the inferior part of their nature*. But how can all these things take place, without implying that sin already exists? These certainly are sins, if there is any such thing as sin in the world. But these particular modes of sinning are represented as accounting for the fact that men are sinners. Thus the same thing is made to be cause and effect. But how will Dr. Ware account for these particular modes of sinning; namely, men's yielding to temptations which it is in their power to resist, obeying the impulse of passion, &c? If sin in any other form is to be accounted for by a proper cause; why not in these forms? Or are we to stop short here, as Dr. Ware seems, p. 37, to think necessary? Speaking with reference to the origin of sin, he says; "when we have traced back the wickedness of men, as it actually exists, to the voluntary neglect, perversion, and abuse of the nature God has given them, we can go no farther." But after all, this is only tracing back the wickedness of men, to itself—wickedness considered generally or in the gross, to wickedness in particular forms.

This corrupt nature of men is what they have made for themselves ; and they have made it by the neglect, perversion, and abuse of the nature God has given them. But their nature must have been already corrupt, when such *neglect*, *perversion*, and *abuse* took place. These were sins. And one would rather suppose it rational to make a corrupt nature account for these particular sins, than to make these account for that ; because, manifestly, if either precedes the other, and may act as a cause of the other, it is the sinful disposition or corrupt nature, not any particular modes of sinning. Common sense leads us to ascribe sinful actions, or particular modes of sinning, to a sinful disposition or heart, as the source, and to speak of them as deriving from that source all their criminality.

In the treatment of this subject, Dr. Ware seems to have a very commendable motive, that is, a conviction of the weakness and fallibility of man. He says, p. 37, "Questions may be asked upon this statement, which cannot be answered, because we have not faculties which enable us in any cases, to trace things up to the first cause and spring of action." Had Dr. Taylor, and other writers like him, observed this maxim, they never would have attempted to trace back the existence of moral evil in man to its first cause ; or if, while attempting this, they had been under the guidance of reason or philosophy, they never would have fixed upon the operation of a free-will, or self-determining power. Because it is perfectly obvious, that the particular motions or determinations of the will are prompted and governed by the disposition or affections of the heart. This is one of the laws of our nature. And if in any case it should cease to be so, our volitions would cease to be either good or bad. If a man should have any volition, or

make any choice, which was not prompted by a disposition or affection of the heart ; that volition or choice would no more be of a moral nature, than an accidental motion of the hand. This sentiment is recognized in all the judgments we pass upon the volitions and external actions of men. The moment you decide what was the disposition of heart, which gave rise to any particular volitions, or determinate acts of the will, you decide the character of those volitions. But if, in any case, you are unable to decide the former, you are of course unable to decide the latter. Or if, in any case, you could entirely separate particular volitions from the disposition of the heart ; you could no longer regard them, as of a moral nature. This is the constitution of the human mind ; the irreversible appointment of God. The prevailing disposition or affection of the heart prompts particular acts or determinations of the will, and satisfactorily accounts for them. For example, the particular choice or determination of Judas to accept the thirty pieces of silver, and deliver Christ to the rulers, arose from his avarice, or from his resentment, or from both. As long as men are free, they will follow their inclination, or choose and act according to their disposition. But was there ever any such thing in human nature, as that particular volitions or determinate acts of the will preceded and produced the disposition or affection of the heart ? And if not,—then, how can any power or act of free-will be considered philosophically, as the cause of what is sinful in the human character ?

There is another commendable motive which seems to have influenced Dr. Ware. He says, p. 37, “ No difficulty so great and insurmountable meets us, as, on the opposite theory, is the moral difficulty in which it involves the character of the Author of our being.” My reply

is, first, that no proof has ever yet been given, that the doctrine of native depravity involves the character of God in any difficulty; and secondly; that if God's character is to be vindicated in relation to this subject, it must be by something better than sophistical reasoning.

But after all, Dr. Ware seems to have no kind of hesitation, as to the truth of his system, and the conclusiveness of his reasoning. He has told us, as though it were perfectly obvious and certain, (and the same may be repeated by others,) "that man is by nature capable of making a right or wrong choice, and no more inclined to one than the other; that he makes himself a sinner by yielding to temptation and obeying the impulse of passion; that all his wickedness may be accounted for without any native bias to sin; that it may all be but the effect of neglect to restrain appetites in themselves good, to give proper direction to powers designed to be useful, and in general, of a failure to exercise properly, in temptations and trials, the powers of direction and resistance, which were in themselves sufficient." Now I have already granted that these are ways in which men commit sin; ways in which they exhibit and increase their depravity. But I might say too, that mankind sin by worshipping idols, by taking the name of God in vain, by profaning the Sabbath, by covetousness and revenge. And why would it not be just as proper for me to account for the fact, that men are sinners, by these forms of sin, and to say, that their depravity is but the effect of idolatry, profaneness, covetousness and revenge, as to do what Dr. Ware has done? The plain fact is, that the neglect and perversion and abuse of our faculties, yielding to temptation, and the other things which Dr. Ware has mentioned, and all the more particular instances of sin, as idolatry, profaneness,

covetousness, slander, revenge, &c, *constitute human wickedness*. They make up the amount of man's sin; as the parts of any thing, taken together, make up the whole. But these various parts of human wickedness, or ways of sinning, are not the cause of the depravity of the heart, but spring from it; as our Saviour teaches, Matt. xv. 19. "Out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." These things *show* the depravity of the heart, but do not *produce* it, nor in any wise *account* for it. Name any form of human wickedness, any thought, volition, choice, action, which is sinful; any instance of yielding to temptation; any perversion or abuse of our faculties; and you name that which proceeds from depravity of heart. If you say it is not so, then you say, that man can commit sin with a sinless heart, or else without any heart at all. Now take the earliest act of sin which men commit, the first sinful thought, volition, or choice, the first yielding to temptation, the first neglect or abuse of God's gifts, which takes place in children; and even that implies a sinful disposition, or depravity of heart, and proceeds from it. The sinfulness of the heart must be resorted to, as the fountain of every act and every form of sin, from the commencement of moral agency. And when Dr. Ware says, all men are *sinner*s "as soon as they are moral agents," he does as much as to say, they have a *sinful or depraved heart* as soon as they are moral agents; as there is no other way in which they can be sinners. If then he would account for the origin of moral evil in man, he must account for the wrong disposition or sinfulness of heart, which is just as evidently presupposed in every particular act and every mode of sinning, as goodness of disposition is presupposed in every act of obedience, or as the principle of gravitation is presupposed

in every instance in which a stone falls to the earth, or any one body tends towards another. The first sinfulness or depravity of the heart is no more *produced* by a sinful volition or action, than the principle of gravitation is produced by the falling of a stone, or the descent of a river. My position is, that men have this sinfulness or depravity of heart by nature, and that it is not the effect of any preceding volition or action in them, nor the effect of any change they undergo after their birth. And in reality, this seems to be taught by Dr. Ware himself in some remarkable passages of his Letters. We gather from pp. 20, 21, 41, 45, that men are by nature accountable beings, or moral agents, but that they are destitute of holiness, and not inclined to holiness. And is it not sin, for those who are accountable beings, to be destitute of holiness, and destitute of all inclination to holiness? Is not this the very case, upon which our Saviour put the mark of his high displeasure, when he said, "I know that ye have not the love of God in you?" But every doubt as to Dr. Ware's views would seem to be taken away by what we find pp. 44, 47, where he represents all men as reasonable beings or moral agents by nature, and sinners as soon as moral agents; and where he represents Christians as delivered from the state of wrath in which they had lived *from their birth*. This is all I would contend for. Dr. Ware would hardly acknowledge this to be really a part of his system. But it is a little remarkable that, in a free investigation of the sense of Scripture, he should let fall expressions so contrary to his own theory, and so consonant to ours.*

* Dr. Ware appears to have been somewhat inadvertent in his language, or unfortunate in his argument on some parts of this subject. In his remarks on Ephes. ii. 3. "And were by nature children of wrath," he says, "it does not point to any thing inbred or native—not to the state of men as they come into the world;" but yet a few lines after, he says it denotes that very state, "into which they came *by their birth*." p. 45.

We have now come in our reasoning, to an *ultimate fact*. Man, in the state into which he is born, has a sinful heart, or is inclined to sin. If any one thinks this supposition inconsistent with moral agency; I ask, how it is any more inconsistent with moral agency for man to be a sinner, or to be inclined to sin at first, than afterwards? If you deny that man can begin to be a sinner at the commencement of his moral agency, or that his first moral affections or actions can be sinful; then tell me when he can begin to be a sinner. Can he the second hour, or month, or year after his moral agency commences? But if he has been exercising his moral agency an hour or month or year, without sin, he has been exercising a holy agency; and he must have done something towards acquiring a habit of holiness. Now is it more easy and more consistent to suppose, that he will begin to sin after such a habit of holiness is formed, than before? No supposition can be made of sin's commencing in man at any period subsequent to his first existing as a moral agent, which will, in the smallest degree, relieve the difficulty attending the supposition of its commencing at first. A being constituted, as man is, an accountable, moral agent, must be blame-worthy for every affection and action which is not conformed to the rule of duty, *whenever* that affection or action takes place. If you deny this, you deny that the rule of duty is just. If you allow this, you allow that sin's commencing at the commencement of man's moral existence does not prevent its ill-desert.

I have wished to dwell upon this point long enough to make it perfectly plain, and to prevent, if possible, the endless repetition of the saying, that man cannot be culpable for any thing which he has by nature—for any thing which is not the *fruit* or *consequence* of his own choice.

Nothing can be more groundless than this notion. For whenever, and in whatever way, man has what the divine law forbids, or is destitute of what it requires, he is culpable ; unless the law itself is in fault.

Mankind will indeed have difficulties respecting that agency, which God is supposed to exercise in this case, and the consistency of it with his infinite holiness and goodness. An outcry is raised against the Orthodox for charging it to the fault of sinners, that they are what God made them. And though it has been shown a thousand times, that our doctrine is liable to no valid objection in this respect ; the objection is still reiterated ; just as though the writings of the Edwardses and others on this subject had never been published, or had been fairly confuted.

My general remark on this topic is, that, in regard to the divine agency, and the divine goodness, the theory which I advocate is liable to no such objection as that above suggested, more than the theory of my opponent. The difficulties attending his theory, are perfectly obvious to every intelligent man. Human beings, he would say, are brought into being in a state where they are exposed to danger. But if there must be danger, still why are they not fortified against it ? Why are not poor, frail creatures, who have as yet no moral principle to guide them, so aided by divine goodness at the outset, that they shall take a right direction ? They are at first, it seems, in a state of perfect equilibrium, inclined neither one way nor the other. Their Maker sees this. He has put them in this state. Why does he not, at this critical period, when they are so weak, and so dependent on him, just interpose, and turn the scale in favour of holiness ? Why does he leave all, when they first act as moral beings, to act wrong—to catch the fa-

tal contagion of sin? Why does he expose them to that contagion? And how does it happen that, without any predisposition to evil, they all run into it? The scale equally balanced, without the least tendency one way or the other, always turns the wrong way. And God stands by, and sees it, and lets it be, when a very little help from him would prevent. And is there no difficulty in this?

But considering the importance attached to the particular subject now before us, I shall extend my remarks a little farther; making it my object to show, that the scheme of Unitarians is attended with as many, and as great difficulties, as that of the Orthodox.

It will doubtless be consistent with Dr. Ware's views, to admit any divine agency in dependent beings, which is necessary to their existing and acting, and which is suited to their rational and moral nature. Philosophical Unitarians, who respect the authority of Hartley, or Priestley, will maintain, as strenuously as any of the Orthodox, that all the volitions and actions of men, whether good or bad, result from causes, which operate according to the settled laws of our nature; and that those causes are entirely under God's control, and are made efficacious by his will. Indeed I see not how any man can deny this, without falling into athesim. To prevent misapprehension in the minds of any of my readers, I will here add, that the agency which we ascribe to God in the formation and preservation of moral agents, and in the direction of those causes which determine their moral actions, is not to be illustrated by the agency of God in the natural world. God's forming a moral agent is not like his forming a stone or a tree. His giving activity to man, and efficacy to the moral causes which operate upon him, is not like his giving efficacy to

the causes which relate to the growth of a tree, or to the motion of the planets. The influence by which God, in any case, leads men to act, is an influence suited to their rational, active nature. It is not only consistent with their moral agency, but is its grand security. The causes which, according to the divine appointment, act upon moral agents, do indeed produce *effects*. But what are those effects, but rational, moral actions, actions of such a nature, that those, who perform them, are justly and in the highest degree accountable?

After these explanatory observations, I request my opponents candidly to inquire, whether the Orthodox theory is involved in any difficulty with respect to the divine agency, from which theirs is free. Is more divine agency necessary to account for moral action in the first stage of our existence, than afterwards? Or in accounting for men's beginning to sin as soon as they begin to be moral agents, is it necessary that the influence which God exerts, or the causes which he appoints, should be applied to them in a different manner from what they are in regard to sins afterwards committed? Are not men at all times equally dependent on God? Are not their feelings and actions regulated by the same causes at the beginning of their moral existence, as at any other period? And are they not as really accountable, when they first exist as moral agents, as when they have been moral agents for years? I speak not here, as to the degree in which they exert their rational powers, or the degree in which they are praise-worthy, or blame-worthy; but as to the fact of their really exerting them, and the fact of their being accountable. Now how can it be supposed, that the theory of native depravity involves any greater difficulty in regard to the divine agency, than any other theory which admits that man is a

sinner ; inasmuch as the only difference in this respect is, that, according to one, man begins to be a sinner earlier, than according to the other ? Those who assert that men begin to be sinners at a later period, are as much obliged to account for that fact without involving a divine agency that is inadmissible, as we are to account for the fact that men are sinners from the first. The fact which they are to account for, is, that men who have been moral agents for some time, and have, by the exercise of holiness, done something towards forming a habit of holiness, should then become sinners. The task of accounting for this is, to say the least, as hard as what falls to us. For how is it that the holy affections, which have for some time been acquiring strength by exercise, should, in every human being, so easily give place to sinful affections ? and that a habit, which has attained more or less confirmation, should be so easily overcome ? How is it that men can, according to the fixed laws which regulate the mind, be uniformly induced to sin, by any causes whatever ? Are not all the causes, which operate upon them, under the direction of the Almighty ? Suppose they are drawn aside from duty by temptations arising from external objects. Who is it but God that formed and arranged those objects ? And who is it but God, that has given man that constitution of body and mind, which exposes him to receive an impression from those objects, and to be drawn aside by their influence ? Who is it that places him in such a situation, that those objects acquire so mighty a sway over his feelings and his actions ? How easy would it be for that God, who contrives and rules all things, so to direct the circumstances of man, or, in all circumstances, so to influence his mind, that he should never fall into

sin? Or suppose he is drawn into sin by his appetites and passions. Who gave him those appetites and passions? And who gave them power thus to influence his conduct? Or who gave him a moral constitution so weak, as to be uniformly overcome by such an influence? Or to go back a little farther. When God formed the plan of this world, did he not clearly see how the mind of man, placed under the influence of such causes, would operate? Did he not see how it would evolve its powers and its affections; how it would be impressed by other objects; and what would ultimately be its moral aspect? Did he not foresee all this? Did he not form things as they are, with a perfect foreknowledge of the result? Was it possible for him to adopt such a scheme, made up of causes and effects in the moral as well as in the natural world, with any other view, than that the consequences which have actually taken place, should take place? Say, if you please, that man's conduct and character are owing to his own free will. Did not God give him his free will? And when he gave it, did he not know exactly what it was, and how it would operate? And is it not according to his plan, that man's free will is influenced as it is by the various causes which affect it? Should it be said, the will is prompted to act by no motive or cause extraneous to itself; my reply would be, first, that this would relieve no difficulty in regard to the character and agency of God. For if the will were not actuated by external motives or causes, then we should be under the necessity of concluding that God so constituted the will, that it should be moved to act by *causes within* itself, those causes, and the influence they should have on the mind, being as much dependent on a divine arrangement, as any thing else. But I should reply, secondly, that as man is in

fact constituted, such a supposition is not admissible. Because acts of the will, not prompted by the disposition of the heart, nor by any other motive, could have no moral character. Of this any man may be satisfied, who will allow himself to think. It is perfectly plain, that any determinations of the will, in order to be virtuous or vicious, must be influenced by motives, and by motives of a moral nature. Motives are the proximate causes of all voluntary actions; and must be so, or we cease to be moral agents. But are not these motives wholly under the divine control?

Now let Dr. Ware, in view of the whole subject, clearly show, how the concern which God must have with moral actions, in any instance of transgression, which takes place in any period of life, can be admitted, without dishonour to his character; and I will show how it can be admitted in the case of that early transgression, which our doctrine asserts. I insist that a moral depravity, existing from the first, involves no greater difficulty respecting the divine agency, than the scheme advocated by our opponents.

The truth of Dr. Ware's declaration, that "we have not faculties which enable us in any cases to trace things up to the first cause and spring of action," I do not admit, without some limitation. It is indeed true in all cases, where God has not, in one way or another, given us sufficient information. But as to the subject now under consideration, God has not left us in such profound ignorance, as seems to be signified by the above cited remark. And is there not an appearance, in this place, of Dr. Ware's shrinking back from the task of tracing the universal wickedness of man up to its cause or spring, lest he should run himself upon the same difficulty, which he charges upon the Orthodox doctrine? But in reali-

ty, how can he excuse himself from attempting, by some adequate cause, to account for that universal wickedness which, as a matter of fact, he frequently acknowledges? It behoves him at least, to admit candidly, and without fear of consequences, the natural, obvious meaning of those texts of Scripture, which expressly assign such a cause; and not to impose upon himself, or his readers, by a representation, which does nothing more or less, than to make sin the cause of itself. He surely could not mean to say, that it has no cause; for this would be the same as saying, that it takes place by chance—that it is a mere accident, or mishap. And who ever thought himself accountable for the freaks of chance?

Possibly Dr. Ware might allow, that our rational, moral nature has settled laws, and always acts under the influence of moral causes, and yet say, it is not for us to know, what those laws or causes are. But most certainly, this must be regarded as a suitable subject of inquiry. “The proper study of mankind is man.” Nor does modesty or humility forbid us to extend, as far as possible, our knowledge of the properties of the mind, and of the causes which influence its actions. Nor does honesty permit us to stifle or conceal our convictions. Knowledge in regard to this general subject is of the highest practical importance. For there is no way, in which we can exercise any salutary discipline over our own minds, or attain any thing like self-government, unless we have learnt, in a good degree, the attributes and laws of our intellectual and moral nature. But how is this knowledge to be obtained? Plainly, by experience and observation. From ourselves and others we learn in what manner, and under what causes the mind acts. Now it might be easy enough for Dr. Ware to account for the moral disorders which prevail in the world, if the single

fact were admitted, that men are actually depraved, or have become sinners. For it is what every body knows, that men will act according to their prevailing disposition, and that their disposition is strengthened and confirmed by repeated acts. But the difficulty, which it behoves my opponent to solve, is, that reasonable, moral beings, coming into existence with a nature perfectly pure—with a nature not in the least inclined to evil, should universally become sinners, as soon as they are capable of action. No act of the *will* can account for this fact. Certainly no *right* act of the will can account for it. And there can be no wrong act of the will, before there is a wrong disposition or affection of heart. But if men have a wrong disposition, they are already depraved, and their being so is not by any means to be accounted for, by that sinful act of the will, which takes place after they become so.

The corrupting influence of bad example is mentioned by Dr. Ware and others, to account for the early and general depravity of mankind. But is this satisfactory? Upon the supposition that men are free from all wrong bias, and perfectly pure, they can have no disposition to follow a bad example, or in the least degree to be pleased with it. And if they have no disposition to follow it, or be pleased with it, it surely cannot injure them. There is no conceivable way, in which any bad example, any temptation or solicitation to sin from without, can be injurious to us, but by meeting with a disposition in us which concurs with it, and draws us into compliance. The power of temptation, whenever it prevails, lies in such a disposition in us. But such a disposition is sinful. Where it exists, even in the smallest degree, sin is already begun. Jesus was always, from the first, perfectly free from any sinful disposition; and

therefore no temptation had any effect upon him, but to exercise and confirm his virtue. Temptation never produces its effect upon moral agents, either in a compulsory manner, or by chance. They have a propensity, often unperceived by themselves, to the sins, which they are tempted to commit. The prevalence of temptation to draw them into sin is always considered a proof, that there is something wrong in their disposition. Were it possible that temptation should in any case have influence to lead men into sin, when there is no sinful inclination mixing with it, and giving it influence ; their compliance might be a misfortune, but could not be crime. It appears therefore, that the influence of temptation, though it may account for the first display of moral evil, or for the first outward, palpable act of sin, cannot account for the first existence of that which is the root and essence of all sin, namely, a corrupt disposition of heart.

The attempt of Dr. Taylor to account for the corruption of the world by the influence of bad example, is particularly answered by Edwards. The following is a summary of the answer.—It is accounting for the corruption of the world by itself. For the universal prevalence of bad examples is the very corruption to be accounted for. If mankind are naturally no more inclined to evil than to good ; how comes it to pass, that there are, in all ages, so many more bad examples, than good ones ? Or if there are not more bad ones than good, how is it that the bad are so much more followed ? And when opposition has been made by good examples, how comes it to pass that it has had so little effect to stem the general current of wickedness ? There have in different ages been examples of eminent piety and goodness, as that of Noah, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of the Pro-

phets, apostles, and martyrs, but especially the example of Christ, which was in all respects perfect, and was exhibited in a manner and in circumstances to excite the highest possible interest. These examples are constantly held up to view in the Scriptures, and by the ministers of religion, and would surely produce a general effect in Christian lands, were there not a propensity in man to follow bad examples rather than good ones.

Again. The influence of bad example, without corruption of nature, will not account for children's universally committing sin, as soon as they are capable of it, especially the children of eminently pious parents.

Several Unitarians have triumphantly repeated of late, what Dr. Taylor said long ago, that the occurrence of sin in Adam, who is admitted on both sides to have been at first sinless, invalidates the grand argument of the Orthodox in proof of *native* depravity.

I frankly acknowledge that this fact does invalidate the argument of the Orthodox, so far as they have attempted to prove the *native* depravity of men from the naked fact, that they all commit sin. Although all who have come to adult years, are sinners; this, *by itself*, is no conclusive proof, that they were sinners, *from their birth*. For if an individual, and that individual the parent of our race, may change from native innocence to sin; we could not, by our own reason, certainly determine, that it would be impossible for the whole race to change in like manner. We must look then for facts. And for the evidence of facts, we must rely wholly on our own experience and observation, and on the word of God. If we could call to remembrance several years at the commencement of our life, in which we were wholly without sin; or if we learnt, by careful observation, that children generally live a number of

years in a perfectly sinless state; or if the Scriptures taught us that such is the state of human beings at the beginning of their life; we should be obliged to admit the original purity of their nature, as we do that of Adam, though they all become sinners afterwards. In regard to Adam, there is satisfactory proof of the fact, that he was, at first, in a state of holiness, and for a time continued in that state. But where is the evidence that such is the first moral state of his posterity? We have seen abundant evidence, that the contrary is true. In the case of Adam, we have evidence, that his transgressing the divine law implied a *change* of his moral nature, from holiness to sin. But respecting his posterity, both experience and the word of God lead us to conclude, that the only moral change they are capable of, is from sin to holiness. The two cases then are materially different. And we can by no means reason respecting the one, as we do respecting the other. The sin of Adam can afford no evidence, that his nature was corrupt from the first. But the sin of his posterity, *circumstanced as it is*, affords the most conclusive evidence, that they are, from the first, subjects of a corrupt nature. Just as the case may be in bodily diseases. A man may have a consumption, when there is no proof that it is a native or constitutional disorder. But a consumption in other cases may be attended with circumstances, which prove beyond a doubt, that the disorder was founded in the original constitution. Both in regard to the bodily and the spiritual disorder, our single inquiry is, whether the circumstances of the case prove it to be natural. What I have said, Chapter III, is the substance of the argument, by which I prove the moral depravity of mankind to be *native*. But there is no evidence at all that Adam's depravity was native. I say then, we cannot reason from one to

the other, because the circumstances of the two are materially different. I do not rely on the fact, taken by itself, that mankind are all sinners ; because if there were any reason to suppose that mankind exist for a time in a sinless state, as Adam did, their being sinners afterwards would not show what their state was originally. But it is as true of Adam, as of any other man, that every sinful volition and act of his presupposed a sinful disposition, and must have arisen from it. And the first existence of that sinful disposition in his case is a fact as hard to be accounted for, as the existence of *native* depravity in his posterity. The commencement of sin in both cases, as also in the case of the angels who kept not their first state, is to be regarded as an ultimate fact in God's empire ; a fact perfectly consistent with the holiness of his character, and with the principles of moral agency. I should be content to consider it in this light, though I should be compelled to leave it totally unexplained, and should find it encompassed with a host of difficulties, still more formidable than any I have seen. But if Unitarians choose to call up again the reasoning of Dr. Taylor in order to show the weakness of one of the arguments employed by the Orthodox ; I must say, their success in this attempt will appear less complete than they have imagined. It is a principle founded on the laws of nature, that the fruit shows not only what the tree now is, but what it was from its origin, from its first vegetation, unless there is evidence that it has in some way undergone a change since. I do not mean to make an argument of a simile, nor to carry the analogy implied in it beyond due limits. But in truth, it is as plainly according to the general constitution of heaven, to consider the life of man to be a development of his intellectual and moral nature, under the influence of

those various causes which act upon it from the first, as to consider the growth and fruit of a tree to be the development of its original nature, acted upon by correspondent causes. This principle holds good in all cases, unless there is proof of such a change as has been suggested above.

CHAPTER VI.

I SHALL now consider the manner in which Dr. Ware confutes several arguments, which the Orthodox derive from Scripture in support of the doctrine of depravity.

In my Letter, I cited Gen. vi, 5, not as a direct, but an indirect proof of the Orthodox doctrine of depravity. My object in quoting this particular passage was to illustrate the general nature of the argument from the Old Testament. I shall not take time to expose again the objection, which Dr. Ware urges against it, as it is the same with that, which I particularly noticed in Letter V. Dr. Ware has made no attempt to invalidate the argument, on which I chiefly relied for the confirmation of my theory. I had stated, that the Apostle quotes promiscuously from the Old Testament, passages descriptive of the wickedness of mankind formerly, as equally applicable to the human race at all times, and that, if the passages referred to are not applicable to mankind universally, the Apostle has given us sophistry instead of argument. My reasoning on the subject is given at length in my fifth Letter, to which I beg leave to refer the reader. It was the

reasoning on which I rested for the truth of my position; and it deserved the attention of Dr. Ware, as much as any thing I had written. But without any particular attention to my reasoning, he repeats the very objection which I had endeavoured to answer. See *Letters to Trinitarians* p. 32. The passage in Gen. vi. 5, he says, “relates not to mankind universally, but to the degenerate race of men of that age, so remarkably and universally corrupt, beyond all that had gone before or have followed since, as to call for the most signal tokens of the vengeance of heaven.”

I begin my remarks on this quotation by saying, that there is not the least reason to think, that the men of that age were corrupt beyond all who have appeared since. There is certainly no evidence of this from the description given of their character; for the Bible contains many a description of human wickedness, as dreadful as that. There is no evidence from the fact, that the world was destroyed by a deluge; for God might intend to accomplish some important ends, by making such a display of his holy vengeance once, though he might not, on account of equal or even greater corruption, think proper to repeat it. It is clear too, that many portions of the human race have suffered more distressing calamities, and of course more dreadful tokens of the divine vengeance, than being destroyed by a deluge. Besides, there is no probability from the circumstances of the case, that men, at that early period of the world, and with privileges comparatively small, could be guilty in so high a degree, as men often have been since. And in addition to all this, our Saviour expressly cautions us against inferring the degree of men’s wickedness from the evils they suffer in the present life. See *Luke* xiii. 1—5. So that, from the sig-

nal tokens of divine vengeance, which the contemporaries of Noah experienced, we could not safely conclude that they were corrupt above all others.

This however is a point of minor consequence. To invalidate my reasoning, Dr. Ware first remarks, that the text, quoted from Gen. vi. 5, "relates not to mankind universally, but to the degenerate race of men of that age." He means by this remark to prove, that we cannot, in any proper sense, apply such passages to mankind generally. I had attempted to show that we can learn what *human nature* is, or what *man* is, from the highest descriptions of human wickedness found in the Old Testament; that those descriptions are *substantially* true in relation to all men; not that all men are criminal in the same degree, but that all have the *same nature, the same original propensities, the same ingredients of character*. In all this he thinks I expressed myself rashly or carelessly. "Are we," he says, much in the manner of Dr. Turnbull,—“are we to consider those places, which, singled out and distinguished from all others, are expressly declared to have been destroyed for their enormous and incorrigible wickedness, as fair representatives of the usual state and character of the human race? People, who were ordered to be wholly extirpated for the very purpose of stopping the contagion of their vices &c,? Are Pharaoh, Jeroboam, and Judas fair examples and representatives of human nature?” I answer, yes. For had they any nature but the *human*? If they were not examples of *human nature*, of what nature were they examples?—of some nature above the human, or below it? The actions of an individual man always result from his own nature, influenced as it is by external causes. But his own nature is *human nature*. And have not others the same? And admitting the moral

nature of men to be the same, may we not satisfactorily account for the variety of characters among them, from the different circumstances in which they are placed, and the different combination of causes under which they act? Or are we to resort to the strange supposition, that all the different degrees of wickedness, which men exhibit, are really to be traced back to a corresponding difference in their original character? That is, are we to suppose, that Pharaoh, Jeroboam and Judas had originally a moral nature as much worse than Moses, David, and Paul, as their ultimate characters were worse? Nothing could be more unphilosophical; nothing more contrary to the word of God, and the common sense of Christians.

Now just try the correctness of the principle which Dr. Ware's reasoning involves; namely, that the account which the Bible gives of the wickedness of men at one period, or in one country, does not make a fair display of *human nature*, and does not show, what is substantially the character of men at any other period, or in any other country. If this principle is correct, of what use to us are the writings of historians, either sacred or profane? It has generally been held up by the best writers, as a peculiar advantage of history, that it gives us useful lessons respecting *human nature*, or makes us acquainted with the character of our species. But if Dr. Ware is right, this cannot be admitted. For according to his opinion, history only gives us a description of the passions, and dispositions, and conduct of particular men or societies of men, who had no common nature, and to whom no one can reasonably suppose that *we* bear any moral likeness. We may read of the envy and malice of Cain; but it is of no use to us, as it cannot be supposed that men nowadays have any tendency in their

nature to envy and hate others who are better than they. And when the Apostle John referred to the conduct of Cain, for the purpose of counselling and warning those to whom he wrote; he must have done it inadvertently, unless there happened to be something in their character, which was different from what was common, and which would render such a procedure suitable. History may tell us of the great corruption and violence of the antediluvian world. But at this day, we can have little concern with what was so distant, except to gratify curiosity. For it would be very unreasonable to suppose that there is any thing in men generally, especially in those who are born in a Christian land, which would lead them into the same excesses, even if they should be placed in the same circumstances. We may read the history of the children of Israel in Egypt, at the Red Sea, at Sinai, in the wilderness, and in the promised land, and our astonishment may be excited at their fickleness, unbelief, ingratitude, and obduracy. But what is all this to us, who live in these better days, who are born Christians, and who cannot, with the least degree of justice, be charged with any disposition or tendency in our nature like theirs? Admit that they were fickle, unbelieving, ungrateful, and obdurate. Does that show what *we* are, or what we should be likely to be in similar circumstances? Are we to learn the character of human nature generally, from their nature? "Would you go to a lazar-house or hospital to know what is the usual state of human health?" And what shall we think of the Apostle to the Romans, who says, "Whatever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning;" and who actually uses the passages of the Old Testament which were descriptive of the wicked-

ness of the Israelites at particular times, as applicable to men generally.

History tells us of the ambition, despotism, and cruelty of wicked kings and commanders. But are men, holding similar stations now, to be suspected of any propensity to similar vices? Indeed, as the moral constitution of different parts of the human species, or the basis of their character is not the same; no individual can be presumed to have any thing like what appears in any other. If I see some of my neighbours proud, selfish, envious, revengeful, in willing servitude to their passions; I am not warranted to conclude that any others have similar traits of character. Those few men may be the only ones in a whole nation, who have their nature so infected. Of the thousands and millions of their contemporaries, supposing them placed under the influence of the same external circumstances, there may not be a single individual, possessing radically the same dispositions. And even if it should be found, that they all have substantially the same traits of character; that they all in fact show themselves in a higher or lower degree proud, selfish, envious, revengeful, slaves to their passions; still I am not to suppose that they have previously any likeness of moral nature, which occasions this likeness of visible character. It may be quite an accidental thing, or it may be owing to some unfortunate motion of free-will, happening to be the same in all, that they have come universally to be subject to the same corrupt passions. It is very certain that the sinful passions or conduct of individuals, or of a nation, or of the whole world from generation to generation, does not show at all what the nature of man is. The conduct of the antediluvians does not show this, nor the conduct of heathen nations, nor of the Israelites, nor of Christen-

dom generally. Indeed there is no common nature among men. Human nature in one may have no substantial likeness to human nature in another; and what is said truly of some cannot be in any sense safely applied to others. The description which was given of men in the Psalms and in the Prophets, cannot be a true description of other generations or societies of men. And when the Apostle, Rom. iii, applied what had been said of men in seasons of uncommon corruption, to the generality of those who lived in his day, did he not do it rashly? Or if he actually knew that the whole multitude, on whom he heaped the reproaches contained in that chapter, were so uncommonly depraved as to deserve them; it would still be the height of injustice to suppose they are deserved by men in general at the present day. And according to the same scheme, there is not one of all the declarations of the Bible respecting human corruption and guilt, which can be safely applied to the men of this generation. For those declarations, whatever appearance of universality some of them may have, were all made with a view to men who lived in times very distant from the present, and exhibited a grossness of character now seldom found. The Apostle Paul declared the carnal mind to be enmity against God, and represented the Ephesian converts as having been enemies to God. But it was a carnal mind which existed and yielded its hateful fruits at that particular time. Who will be so uncandid as to look upon the bulk of mankind now, especially in Christian lands, as having that carnal mind which is enmity against God? We find also that Christ said, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and on the ground of human corruption, thus expressed, asserted the necessity of regeneration. But he must have said it with reference to that carnal

race of men, by whom he was surrounded. Of those who are born among us now, it cannot be said that they are *flesh* in any such sense, as implies the necessity of being born again; any more than David's singular acknowledgment that he was "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin,"—made in very peculiar circumstances, and under great depression of spirits, can be understood as signifying any thing in regard to the native character of men generally. The Bible contains commands, exhortations, and warnings to saints and sinners, which were occasioned by the depravity of their hearts, and referred directly to their sinful passions and habits. But such commands, exhortations, and warnings may be altogether inapplicable to us, on account of our exemption from that depravity which would render them suitable to our case. The Apostle says; "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." He says all this of those Christians who lived in his day. To them it properly related. But it cannot be supposed essential to the character of the present generation of Christians, that they should be the subjects of any such change. Indeed we must go still farther. To give consistency throughout to the system, on the ground of which these remarks have proceeded, we must maintain that we are under no obligation to obey the commands of the *decalogue*. For to whom did God speak, when he said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me; thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image; thou shalt not take the name of God in vain; remember the Sabbath day," &c? Did he not speak to those particular persons who then surrounded the holy mount? Is it said, or intimated, that men of future ages should come under the obligation of these strict and holy commands? Has God ever spoken particularly to us, and required us

to observe the precepts of the decalogue? What authority then have the ministers of religion to urge the high obligation of these precepts upon us, just as though God had actually spoken to us in these last days, and given us commands, as he did the Israelites encamped at the foot of Sinai? Surely when they do this, they overlook the vast difference between us, who live in an age of such intellectual and moral refinement, and the posterity of Jacob, at that time in so uncultivated a state, and just let loose from "the house of bondage." We cannot look to any of the commands which God gave *them*, to learn what he requires of *us*. Even supposing that, by the authority of Prophets and Apostles, they were enjoined on other generations of men who came after; where is the Prophet or Apostle, who has expressly declared that men, living in the nineteenth century, and in this particular part of the world, would all be under obligation to obey those very commands, which were enjoined upon men thousands of years ago?—The same also as to the New Testament. Jesus said, *repent*. But he said it to his *contemporaries*, not to *us*. He said too, "He that believeth shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." But that awful alternative was pressed upon that generation of Jews, not upon *us*. And in fact, all parts of the Bible were addressed to men of other times, and in other circumstances; and there is no doctrine contained in it respecting the present state or future prospects of men, how true soever it might have been when first declared, which can be assumed as true and applicable now; and no command, however just and important in relation to those, to whom it was first addressed, which can bind us; and no warning of danger, however alarming once, which can properly alarm us; and no promise of good, however cheering and animating

once, which can cheer and animate us. The whole Bible, as really as that part which describes human corruption, was spoken and written in other times, and to another race of men ; and nothing short of a new revelation can convince us, that the book can be of any practical use to us, except to inform us what the inhabitants of the world once were, and how God once treated them.

I hope to be excused for exhibiting at such length what seems plainly implied in the system, which has here come under notice, and what are its legitimate consequences. The principle, on which that system sets aside the descriptions of human depravity contained in the Bible, as not in any way applicable to us, would, if closely adhered to, lead on to all the extremities above suggested. It would set aside one part of the Bible, as well as another. It would invalidate, in regard to us, the doctrinal and preceptive part, as well as that part which is descriptive of man's depravity. The same principle, which would free us from the mortification of applying to ourselves the high charges of corruption and guilt, contained in the Bible, would also deprive us of its high promises of divine mercy. If any man who sets aside the account of human wickedness found in the Scriptures, as inapplicable to us, still thinks the moral precepts applicable ; I ask, on what principle such an application is founded ? Is there any express declaration in the Scriptures themselves, that the moral precepts, which were given thousands of years ago, are to be thus understood ? Is it any where in the Bible said, that the commands of God, there announced, should be obligatory upon men in every country and in every age ? Not a word of this. In what way then are we satisfied, that every human being is under the same perfect obligation to obey the moral pre-

cepts of the Bible, as if God actually addressed them to him in particular? How is it that we immediately conclude that all men, now living, are proper subjects of the same law which God gave to men in former times, and feel it to be right for us to enjoin it upon them to love God supremely, to love their neighbours as themselves, and to keep all the precepts of the Bible? When the ministers of Christ go to pagan nations, how is it that they feel themselves authorized to do just what the apostles did,—to call upon all men to forsake the vanities of heathenism, to repent, and to worship the true God? What could render all this proper, but the obvious principle that, as to the essential properties of moral agents, men in all ages and climates are alike? Whenever we meet a human being, we instantly take it for granted, that he is a moral agent like ourselves, and like those who first received the law, and that the law is as suitable to him, as it was to them. When we see an infant, we take it for granted, as we have a right to do, that he is born to be a moral agent, and that it will be proper to inculcate the divine precepts upon him, as soon as he can understand them; just as proper as though the divine Lawgiver expressly directed us to inculcate them upon that particular child. To all this I think the opposers of Orthodoxy would readily agree. But it is upon the same general principle that I proceed in my reasoning, with respect to the subject under discussion. There is as real evidence that men in all ages and climates are alike in regard to the essential traits of *moral character*, as in regard to the properties which constitute them proper subjects of law. This is in truth the practical judgment of men universally. Who does not know enough of human nature to satisfy him, that it always has the same essential attributes? Who doubts that a man, whom he now

for the first time meets, will exhibit the same characteristics, as other men—the same *substantially*, though perhaps not in form? The man whom we never saw before, we doubt not has pride, and that, in circumstances which are likely to occur, he will show pride,—not in this or that particular way, but in some way, according to circumstances. We doubt not he has a culpable self-love, which will lead him, in a manner not to be justified, to prefer his own interest to that of others; a self-love therefore, which will require strong motives, and watchful discipline, and powerful influence from above to subdue it. We doubt not he has a tendency to resent an injury, and to recompense evil for evil; and to envy those above him, especially if their superiority operates sensibly to his disadvantage. And so of the rest. If in any case we should regulate our conduct towards particular men upon any other principle, than that they are subject to the same corrupt affections with others, and that, acting under the influence of similar causes, they are likely to exhibit similar traits of character; we should be charged, and very justly, with being deficient in the knowledge of our own species. And if any man thinks *himself* exempt from the moral depravity which men have generally exhibited, and forms his judgment and his maxims of conduct in regard to himself, on the principle, that he has little or none of the wickedness which has disgraced and ruined others; he gives conclusive proof of self-ignorance.

It is on this plain principle of the sameness of human nature in all ages and countries, that I would apply the mortifying description of human wickedness, found in the Bible, to men of the present generation; just as the Apostle applied the description, which had been given of other generations of men, to those who lived in his

day. It is on this principle that I have said, we may draw practical instruction in regard to ourselves from the history of Pharaoh, of Saul, of Jeroboam, and of the Jews who crucified the Son of God. That history shows me not only what was in those particular men, but what is in *human nature*, what is in *my nature*. It shows me what is man. In ourselves we may find those very sinful dispositions which, after having been strengthened and matured by various causes, constituted those men just what they were ; and which, operating in similar circumstances, would render us like them. We are as truly like them in a moral view, as a man in an intellectual view, is like those who have risen somewhat above him in the acquisition of knowledge, but whom he would have equalled, had he been in their circumstances.

Dr. Ware tells us, what indeed deserves special attention, that the very passages of Scripture, which represent men as universally corrupt, “teach us with what qualifications they are to be understood.” He refers particularly to Psalm xiv, and says, “that while it asserts in the strong language of emotion and eastern hyperbole, that all are gone aside,—that there is none that doeth good, *no, not one* ; it goes on to speak of a generation of the righteous.” I might mention it as a fact of the same kind, that an exception was made in favour of Noah, Lot, and others, who lived in the midst of abounding wickedness. And the Orthodox make just such an exception now. When they understand the language of the Bible, which was descriptive of the great wickedness of men formerly, as expressive of the universal depravity of those who live at the present day ; they have no doubt there are many exceptions ;—many good men, who obey God, and are entitled to the happiness of heaven. The question is, how these two representations of Scrip-

ture can consist together, and in what manner we are to modify the sense of the one by the other. Here we come to the grand principle of interpretation; namely; that *the Bible, taken as a whole, must explain itself*. How then does the Bible account for the fact, that some men are holy, while the generality are sinful? Does it ever represent them to be holy *by nature*? No, never. It may sometimes speak of their being holy, as a matter of fact simply, without assigning the cause of it. But in other places, it does, with the greatest explicitness, account for this fact. It represents the children of God as being holy, in consequence of regeneration. They who are in Christ, are *new creatures*. *Old things are passed away; all things are become new*. The Bible teaches all who are holy, to ascribe their holiness to the new-creating Spirit of God; while it represents their natural character to be like that of others, and describes it in the same language. So that the exception made in their favour does not respect their own native character, but the new character which they possess in consequence of being *born of the Spirit*. The principle I am contending for, may be easily illustrated by natural things. It may be said of a certain species of shrub or tree, for example, the thorn-bush, that it bears no useful fruit; although in consequence of a scion being ingrafted into it from another tree, it may bear fruit that is delicious and salutary. Still the proper nature of the shrub, and the just description of it, remain the same; and we never think of representing it as a property of the thorn-bush, that it bears delicious fruit. Thus in the passages above referred to, the universal terms which describe human wickedness, instead of being limited as Dr. Ware proposes, are truly applicable to all men without exception, *in regard to their own proper, original char-*

acter. Those who are now Christians, are naturally subjects of the same depravity with others; and their being different now is owing to "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Here we are furnished with an easy answer to some of Dr. Ware's questions, p. 38. "Let it be asked," he says, "why the cruelty and obstinacy of Pharaoh, rather than the humanity, and piety, and meekness of Moses; why the idolatry, and unprincipled ambition and selfishness of Jeroboam, rather than the piety, and tenderness of conscience, and public spirit of Josiah; why the single wretch who was so base as to betray his master, rather than the eleven who were true and faithful to him, should be selected as specimens of the race to which they belong?" The answer is, that all these vices and iniquities are the natural, spontaneous growth of human nature. They are what the Apostle calls "the fruits of the flesh;"—of that flesh which, according to John iii. 6, belongs to us by our natural birth; while the virtues enumerated are the fruits of the Spirit, or the effects of that divine influence, by which men are delivered from their natural character, and made new creatures. Those men are justly selected, as specimens of the race to which they belong, who are just what their own proper nature makes them, or whose traits of character result from their own moral constitution or nature, unchanged by the Spirit of God. But it would be obviously unjust to select, as specimens of our race, or of the moral character which properly belongs to us, those who are what they are, not by nature, but by grace, or by the new-creating Spirit of God. And if the Bible is made its own interpreter, this must be allowed to be fact with regard to every human being who is the subject of holiness. But the case which Dr. Ware afterwards brings into view, is

altogether different. He asks, "would you select the period of seven years' famine, as an example of the usual fertility of Egypt? The desolating pestilence in the days of David, as a fair specimen of the salubrity of the climate of Israel?" I answer, no. Because the famine does not show the proper character of the soil of Egypt, nor the pestilence, of the climate of Israel. They were real exceptions to what was natural; and Dr. Ware cannot justly adduce them, as he does, unless he can show, that great depravity is as foreign to the moral nature of man, as the famine was to the soil in one case, and the pestilence to the climate in the other.

CHAPTER VII.

Dr. Ware's reply to the argument from John iii. 3. Rom. v. 12. Ephes. ii. 3.

DR. WARE is convinced that the universal necessity of regeneration, asserted in John iii. 3, may consist with original innocency. Still, in his apprehension, the passage implies "the absence or want of that which was necessary to becoming a subject of the kingdom of God;" p. 41; or as he expresses it, p. 42, "that men do not possess by birth that character of personal holiness, which is necessary to their being Christians." Let the reader consider a moment the consistency between this, and what is found in other places. Here, he says of all who are born into the world in every age, that they are by birth destitute of that holiness which is necessary to their being Christians. But soon after, p. 47, he affirms, that "those now born into the world in Christian lands, are as the Ephesians were after their conversion to

Christianity, saved—quicken—fellow-citizens of the saints.” What he has written on this point, taken together, stands thus. According to one place, men by their birth receive no moral character. According to another, they are destitute of that which is necessary to their becoming subjects of God’s kingdom. And according to a third, “Jews and Gentiles were by nature, what they were *before* they became Christians.” But here, p. 47, men are Christians by birth. In that very state in which they are born, instead of being as before described, without a moral character of any kind, they have a character that is good. Instead of wanting that which is necessary to their becoming subjects of the kingdom of God, as before, they are by their birth, of the household of God, fellow-heirs with the saints. Instead of being by their birth destitute of holiness, they are subjects of holiness, quickened, sanctified, as the Ephesians were *after* they became Christians. Little children or infants, generally, instead of being mere human beings, without any disposition or propensity whatever, “are what men are to become by regeneration.” p. 31.

I hope the reader will not attribute these contradictions to the fault of Dr. Ware’s understanding, so much as to the fault of the system, which he has the misfortune to defend. A man like him would not expose himself in this manner, if his cause did not mislead him. With this apology for him, let me proceed to a few more observations on these remarkable passages, compared together.

In p. 41, men are represented as “reasonable, accountable beings by their natural birth.” If accountable beings, they are moral agents, they are under the divine law, and must be judged according to that law. And

this is the same as saying, they will be condemned, if they are not conformed to the law, and approved, if conformed to it. But while treating the same subject in other places, our Author gives us “reasonable, accountable beings,” or moral agents, who have nothing in their disposition or character which is either right or wrong, and nothing for which they can be judged. Accountable beings, without any thing, either good or bad, for which they are accountable ! Moral agents, without moral affections !

According to Dr. Ware’s statements, it would seem that the circumstances of our birth have an astonishing and mysterious efficacy as to the formation of moral character. Those who are born in Christian lands are, *by birth*, what the converted Ephesians were,—*Christians, children of God, heirs of heaven*. But the moment you pass the line which bounds Christendom, and enter a pagan land, you find it quite different. There, in consequence of an arrangement of divine providence, in which human beings could have no agency, and over which they could have no power, they are born without any moral disposition ; and of course are destitute of that holiness, which is necessary to their being admitted into Christ’s kingdom ; so that it is plainly necessary that they should be born again,—should undergo “a great moral change,” and form “a new character.” But here in Christendom, it is not so. Either the atmosphere of a Christian land, or the character and privileges of their parents, or some other causes have so salutary an influence upon their birth, that they possess at once, as soon as they are born, the character of converts. They are sanctified, quickened, and members of God’s household, by their natural birth. So that, in regard to them, regeneration is not necessary. They are as good by their

first birth, as the Ephesians were, after they were "born again."—Now we should be much indebted to Dr. Ware, if he would tell us by what arguments, from Scripture or reason, he supports such an opinion as this. He indeed makes it a subject of strong affirmation. Referring to the description of the converted Ephesians, he says; "All this language was applied to the Ephesians universally after their conversion, and *all of it is as applicable now universally to those who are Christians by birth.*" We receive his affirmation, as showing clearly what his opinion is. This is all we would ask of him in a similar case; and this no doubt is all he would ask of us.

Dr. Ware considers the whole passage, Rom. v, as so intricate and obscure, that it can afford no solid support to any doctrine, farther than it is explained by other passages; and he seems to think I must view it in this light. I did indeed say that the passage is "*in some respects very obscure.*" And so it may be, though in other respects it is very clear. It is surely nothing uncommon, either in inspired or uninspired writings, that a passage should contain a particular doctrine with perfect plainness and certainty, while its import, in regard to some other points, can hardly be ascertained. Such in many instances is the nature of the subject, that while, in some parts it is plain and obvious, in other parts it is necessarily obscure. The passage, Rom. v. 12—21, does, in my view, teach an important Christian doctrine more plainly and fully, and in language less capable of being misconstrued, than any other passage of Scripture. The writer declares his main doctrine again and again. He declares it in a great variety of forms, and with great strength of expression. He treats his principal subject, as though he was determined, in that one passage, to make it so plain, that no man could ever be at any loss

respecting it. And would not the opposers of Orthodoxy consider any passage in this light, if it should happen to teach, in the same clear, diversified, and forcible manner, some doctrine in their creed? Dr. Ware pleads the different meanings of the phrase *Εφ' ὧ*, translated, *for that*, as a reason why we should not attach much consequence to the passage. I will only say, that the signification of the phrase, which is given in the common version, and which is the only one that leaves to the Apostle the credit of speaking good sense, fully supports our scheme. Whatever variety of signification the phrase may have in other circumstances, its signification here is obvious, and the argument derived from the passage, conclusive.

I have no objection, as I have before suggested, to the manner in which Dr. Ware proposes to limit the sense of the assertion, that *all have sinned*. He says, it is the assertion of a fact, which none will deny; and that, all circumstances being taken into view, it must mean, "all who are capable of sinning, all as soon as they are moral agents." I presume Dr. Ware would be reluctant to undertake the task of determining, at what precise period human beings become moral agents. If he should undertake this, we might reasonably expect him to determine it, as he seems already to have done in his Letters, where he gives it as his opinion, that men are moral agents by their birth. Speaking, p. 21, of what men are by nature, he represents them as having passions implanted in them, natural affections, reason and conscience; which, taken together, make them accountable beings, capable of right and wrong. This is perfectly equivalent to saying, they are moral agents. He asserts nearly the same thing, p. 41. If these passages are put together, and understood according to the fair import of the words, they teach quite as much, as any

friend of Orthodoxy believes, namely, that *all men are sinners as soon as they are born*. I beg the reader to review and compare the passages to which I have referred, and see whether I have not given the just result of Dr. Ware's own representations. And if he does indeed entertain these views, we should suppose he might be relieved from the difficulty he feels, in conceiving that Adam's posterity should be subjected to death and other sufferings, as penal evils, without admitting that they are charged with the sin of another. See his Letters, p. 43. He says, "if this clause (all have sinned) be understood in a sense which shall prove any thing to the purpose, it will prove the genuine old Calvinistic doctrine, the imputation of Adam's sin." But in the course of his discussion, he makes it prove something to the purpose, without any regard to that doctrine. We have seen his representation to be, that all are sinners as soon as they are capable of sin, or as soon as they are moral agents, and that they are reasonable, accountable beings, or moral agents, by their birth. The conclusion from these premises must be, that they are sinners, or sinful moral agents, by their birth. And if they are sinners, or have a sinful disposition or character by their birth, then obviously, in view of that sinfulness, death and other evils which they suffer, may be *penal* evils, without any thing like a literal imputation of Adam's sin. I stated in my Letters, as the sentiment of the Apostle, that in consequence of Adam's transgression, his posterity were constituted sinners, and subjected to death and other sufferings, *as penal evils*. Dr. Ware says, if this means any thing to the purpose, and yet short of the common notion of imputation, he is unable to perceive what it is. But it is strange, that his own representation did not help him to perceive.—All are sinners. This is a fact;

and according to the divine constitution here set forth by the Apostle, this fact is the first or nearest consequence of Adam's transgression. The fact intended is, that all are sinners *really*, not in pretence; *in their own persons*, not in the person of another; and that the evils they endure relate directly to their own sinfulness, as the *meritorious cause*, and remotely to the sin of Adam, as the *occasion*; that is, the occasion of the existence of that *personal sinfulness*, on account of which penal evils are suffered. I do not admit that they are sinners by the sin of Adam, in such a sense that they suffer *directly* on his account, they themselves being free from moral pollution; or in any sense but this, that they are constituted and actually exist, *sinners*, that is, sinful, ill-deserving creatures, not by the transfer of another's guilt to them, (a thing utterly incongruous and inconceivable,) but in their own persons; in short, that they are essentially what they show themselves to be in their subsequent life. Speaking of the representation of Stapher, that God gives Adam a posterity like himself, Dr. Ware very justly says, "if this means any thing, it must mean *sinners* like himself;" that is, sinners in their own persons, sinful in their character, ill-deserving in themselves, and so justly liable to suffering. Such they are, or they are not like Adam.

On this part of the general subject of Dr. Ware's Letters, I have only a few more remarks. Page 49 and elsewhere, he makes much of man's having a natural or communicated power to resist his sinful propensities, and to be otherwise than what he is. Now in regard to man's *power*, properly so called, our notions are probably as high as Dr. Ware's. We conceive man's power, understood in its literal, proper sense, to be always com-

mensurate with his obligation. There can be no duty without it, and none beyond it.

I hope Dr. Ware will reconsider what he has written respecting a propensity to sin; namely; "that the propensity itself is no sin, and implies no guilt." p. 49. Every man must decide, and does decide, that a propensity, inclination, or disposition to sin, is the very essence of sin, and the only thing which makes any outward action or any volition sinful. Before we impute real blame to a man for any action, we either know, or take it for granted, that he has a wrong disposition or propensity. And in regard to ourselves; if, in any case where our actions appear exceptionable in the view of man, we are conscious of no bad disposition or propensity; we charge ourselves with no real guilt. But how fair soever our actions may appear to man, if we are conscious of having a sinful propensity or disposition, we condemn ourselves,—we condemn ourselves for the disposition itself, as being the essence of sin.

In connexion with this subject, Dr. Ware makes one representation of the scheme of Calvinism, on which I beg leave briefly to remark. He says, p. 50; "If I rightly understand the scheme of Calvinism, divine punishments are not, according to that scheme, disciplinary, but vindictive. God punishes his offending creatures not to reform them, but to vindicate his authority. The sufferings of the wicked have no tendency to reform," &c. But this cannot be admitted as a just account of Calvinism, unless the remarks are understood to relate exclusively to *future* punishment. So far as my information extends, all Calvinists, whether higher or lower, consider the sufferings of the present life, not only as tending to vindicate the character and law of God, but as *disciplinary*, that is, as having a real tendency, under the dis-

pensation of mercy, to reform the wicked ; a tendency, which is in many cases effectual, and which would be so in all cases, were it not counteracted by other causes. In respect to this subject, the Scripture leads us to make a clear distinction between the state of probation, and of retribution. In the former, the evils which God inflicts on men are corrective or disciplinary, though at the same time suited to show God's justice, and to vindicate his authority. In the latter state, as we understand the word of God, the reformation of the wicked does not come within the design of punishment. The end to be secured relates wholly to the divine character and kingdom. But we cannot accede to Dr. Ware's notion, that *disciplinary* punishment may be inflicted by a righteous and benevolent God, without real ill-desert in those who suffer. Is not disciplinary punishment intended for correction and reformation ? But what place can there be for *correction* or *reformation* in regard to those, who are not faulty, or blame-worthy ? What need of reformation ? And what occasion for correction ? Suppose punishment is laid upon them. How can it produce any good effect ? Certainly not according to any physical laws. The effect to be produced is in the *mind*, and must be produced, if produced at all, according to the laws of our intelligent and moral nature. Punishment, to be salutary, must relate to some fault, some moral evil, and must express to us the divine displeasure on account of it. Where this is the case, there is correction ; and if we are not refractory, there will be reformation.

I can spend but a few moments upon the views of our Author, p. 52. He thinks that the scheme of Unitarians on the subject of depravity is suited to produce

much greater humility and self-abhorrence, than that of the Orthodox. Those, who are familiarly acquainted with what the advocates of Unitarianism and of Orthodoxy have written on the subject of human corruption, and with the views they respectively entertain as to the proper estimate of our own character, must, I think, be surprised at this opinion of Dr. Ware. The truth is, Unitarians have constantly complained, that the Orthodox make too low an estimate of human virtue; that they indulge too debasing views of human nature, and paint the wickedness of their species in too strong colours. At the same time, Unitarians of an independent, liberal judgment, like Dr. Priestley, have freely acknowledged the tendency of our doctrine of depravity, erroneous as they think it, to promote deep humility. And I have been greatly mistaken, if the repugnancy of the doctrine to the *pride* of the heart has not occasioned the chief objection against it. Dr. Ware indeed says; “we certainly have no cause to feel ourselves humbled under a sense of any thing we are *by nature*.” But he says it very incautiously. For whatever he may think of those born in Christian lands; he hesitates not to allow that the Ephesians “were *by nature* children of wrath;” that is, sinful, and deserving of wrath. Was not this a cause for humility in them? The foundation of Dr. Ware’s misapprehension must, I think, be, that he considers *native* sinfulness to be, in its essential properties, different from the sinfulness exhibited in our life; whereas these two must be regarded as only the commencement, and the continuance of the same thing. “Humility and self-condemnation,” Dr. Ware says, “should spring only from the consciousness of a course of life not answering to the powers, and faculties, and privileges of our nature.” Now which should be the occasion of greater humility and

self-condemnation to a man, the consciousness that such a course as this has extended through one or two years, or that it has extended through his whole life? Sin must be considered as essentially the same thing, whether it begin sooner or later. And other things being equal, a man's guilt is proportionate to the duration of his sinfulness. Dr. Ware and other writers distinguish *native* wickedness from *active, voluntary* wickedness. But they do it without reason. For that which is *native* may be as *active* and *voluntary*, as that which gets into the mind afterwards. We certainly do not make such a distinction in regard to other things. For example; those appetites which are given us with our original constitution and are therefore called natural, are as *strong* and *active* as others. It is true, these appetites have no direct relation to the moral law, and in regard to that law, are neither right nor wrong. But we do not deny their relation to the law because they belong to us from the first. It is simply from a consideration of the real nature of any affection or action of man, and not from a consideration of the time or the occasion of its beginning to exist, that we denominate it good or bad, praise-worthy or blame-worthy. If man began to exercise love to God at his first existence, surely our opponents would not, on that account, consider it, as any the less excellent and worthy of approbation. Let any one read what Dr. Ware has written respecting that gratitude, that love of truth, that kindness, and those other dispositions and tendencies to good, which he represents as *native* properties of man, and see whether there is the least appearance of his considering them any the less amiable or praise-worthy, on that account. Why then should bad dispositions, or tendencies to evil, which are natural, be, for the same reason, considered as any the less odious and blame-worthy?

Dr. Ware has no difficulty in representing men who are born in Christian lands, as having by their birth just what the Ephesians had after their conversion; that is, religion, holiness. But where does he intimate that their holiness was less estimable, because it was a *native* property?

Our author seems fond of saying and of repeating, that our doctrine ascribes human wickedness to the agency of God; that it traces sin to that constitution which was given us by our Creator, &c. But though all this is admitted, even in the offensive terms he uses; the difficulty is not a whit greater, than what attends his system. He says, that human beings, created innocent and pure, afterwards fall into sin by their own choice, and in the exercise of their own free agency. Now if there is any truth in Philosophy or Revelation, it can be proved that their falling into sin, at any period of their life, is a thing as really to be ascribed to the operation of their Maker, or to the constitution he has given them, as *native* sinfulness. For suppose, according to Dr. Ware's scheme, that a man, influenced by strong temptation, at any time falls into sin. Who gave him a constitution of mind, fitted to be wrought upon by temptation? And who ordered things so, that he should be exposed to temptation, and to those particular temptations which prevail to draw him into sin? Did not God know the result beforehand? Was it not a result which naturally flowed from causes, which God directed and controlled, operating upon a moral nature which he created, and according to laws which he established? The question I would ask him to solve, is, how, in such a case, there can be any blame? I am far from saying, that no difficulty attends the scheme of native depravity, in this respect. But the difficulty is, in my view, no greater, than what attends any other scheme.

But I must check my inclination to pursue this metaphysical mode of reasoning ; though it must be allowed that I have an apology, in the metaphysical nature of the arguments to be confuted. I will just add, that the habit of attributing moral evil to God in such a way as to destroy or diminish its criminality, is, in my view, one of the worst habits, of which the human mind is capable. It produces alarming stupidity of conscience and hardness of heart, and leads to the most destructive fatalism.



CHAPTER VIII.

As to the practical importance of the subject of native depravity, which has now been discussed at such length, any man may be satisfied, who will maturely consider what connexion it must have with our views, generally, of Christian truth and piety. It is not enough to say, that the denial of the original, native corruption of man does *in fact* go in company with such and such notions of Christianity. It may be shown, and it must be remembered, that the connexion, which exists in fact, is not accidental, but arises directly from the nature of the subject. If we believe that our moral disease results from our moral constitution,—that it is inwrought in our very nature ; we shall surely have different views of the remedy that is necessary, from what we should have, if we considered our disease as merely accidental, or as less deep and radical. Just as it is in regard to a bodily disease. If it is a slight, superficial disorder, which first appeared but yesterday, or which has appeared but a

few times, the original constitution being sound and vigorous ; we have little concern. Some gentle remedy will be sufficient to remove it ; or perhaps it will shortly disappear of itself. But if the disease is rooted in our constitution ; if it began to show itself very early, and evidently results from our original structure ; especially, if there is evidence of its being hereditary ; it becomes an alarming case. Some powerful remedy is necessary ; something that will effect a great and salutary change in our very constitution. If this cannot be had, we despair of a thorough cure. In like manner, those who seriously believe themselves and others to be the subjects of a native and entire depravity, must be convinced, that a mighty operation of divine power is necessary to make them holy. They must view it as indispensable, that they should be born again. Passing by human efforts, and all slight, common remedies, as totally inadequate, they must found every hope of moral purification on that energy of God, which gives men a new heart and a new spirit,—which creates them in Christ Jesus unto good works. Though they have been born in a Christian land ; though they have enjoyed the best instruction, and witnessed examples of the greatest purity ; though distinguished by the most correct habits, by the most useful actions, and by the highest improvement of their rational powers and natural sensibilities ; and though applauded for their virtues by those who look only on the outward appearance ; yet, while unrenewed, they find in themselves that corruption of heart, which is the fountain of all iniquity ;—they find the utter want of that holiness, without which no man can see the Lord. The disease of their nature, that is, the earthly, selfish, unholy disposition, which has from the first borne sway in their hearts, and influenced all their actions, spoils the

beauty of their fair exterior, lays them low in the dust, and brings them to rely solely on the purifying grace of God. They have a strong, humbling conviction that, amiable and excellent as their character may appear to others, they must be saved, if saved at all, *by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*. Through their whole course, their religious feelings and duties are materially affected by their belief of the radical, native depravity of their hearts. While sensible of this deep-rooted evil of their nature, they suffer no proud self-complacency to possess their minds. New reasons constantly occur for self-distrust and self-abhorrence. In a greater or less degree, the fountain of evil still remains within them. They never account themselves to have attained complete victory over sin. They have perpetually an inward warfare, and in every part of their warfare, they confide in that divine grace, which gives purity and strength to the soul. In their latest moments, they deplore that obstinate, hateful malady of their nature, which has so long kept up its resistance to the best means of cure; and, with their dying breath, they cry for the Spirit of God to complete their sanctification, and fit them for the presence of him whom their soul loveth.

Consider now, how different are the views of those who deny the native corruption of man, and believe him to be originally pure; and how different the whole aspect of their religion. On this subject, I would gladly excuse myself from saying what the case seems to require; because my controversy is with a man, whose talents and office I would treat with invariable respect, whose coolness of judgment and sobriety of character I wish to copy, and whose candour, civility, and kindness towards me I am most cordially disposed to reciprocate. I trust

it will be well understood, that my animadversions relate not to him, personally, but to the system which he has undertaken to unfold and vindicate. What then is the scheme of practical religion, with which the denial of innate depravity is associated? If I believe, as a general truth, “that young children are what men are to become by regeneration;” that is, if I believe them to be friends of God, subjects of real holiness; if I believe that all, who are now born into the world in Christian lands, are already “saved by the grace of God, and fellow citizens with the saints;” I must treat them accordingly. I must treat them as persons, who have no need of conversion, or of the grace of God to effect it; inasmuch as they are born Christians, and already possess the character of converts. And if at any time I seem to see some mark of depravity common to children, I must apologize for it, and soothe their feelings by telling them, it can “fairly be traced to causes which imply no degree of depravity, and no fault of character or disposition;” so that they have no occasion for uneasiness, or for reformation. And if I address sinners at large, either in public or in private; instead of depicting their guilt, as the inspired writers do, and labouring to make them feel, that they are dead in trespasses and sins, and justly under the wrath of God; I must not hesitate to say to them, as our Author does, p. 24, “that as much as there is of wickedness and vice, there is far more of virtue and goodness;—that wickedness, far from being the prevailing part of the human character, makes but an inconsiderable part of it.” And if I ever have occasion to speak to men of the worst character, to liars, thieves, adulterers, blasphemers, men of revenge and blood, infidels, atheists,—I must soothe *their* feelings too, not by persuading them to apply to that blood which

cleanseth from all sin—not by pointing them to mercy higher than the heavens;—but by so far forgetting the word of God, as to tell them, “that even in the worst of men, good feelings and principles are predominant,” and that, as “the greatest liar” may comfort himself with the idea, that “by the constitution of his nature he speaks many truths to every lie he utters;” so other monsters of wickedness should not deprive themselves of the satisfaction of believing, “that in the course of their lives, they perform many more good than bad actions.”* And if I am to carry such a flattering message to “the worst of men;” with what sincere congratulations must I address myself to the generality? As to men who are destitute of holiness, enemies to God, dead in sin, men whose imaginations and desires are only evil, and who are ready to perish,—none can be found among us. Through the healing influence of being born in Christian lands, another race of men has sprung up, saints by nature, needing no renovation; of the household of faith and of the kingdom of God by their first birth; to whom it would be altogether superfluous to be born again of the Spirit of God.†

If men transgress the rules of morality, I must indeed, according to Dr. Ware’s views, tell them, they are sinners, and urge them to repent. But here is the difference. If I am duly impressed with the common doctrine of depravity, I shall endeavour to convince them, whether old or young, not only of the impropriety and guilt of the particular acts of sin they have committed, but of the corrupt principle, the depravity of heart, from which they have proceeded, and from which, if it remain, sinful acts will continue to proceed; and to show them, that it is not more evidently their concern to re-

* See Letters to Trin. and Calv. p. 25.

† Do. p. 47.

pent of the particular sins committed, than it is to be renewed in the Spirit of their minds. I shall take occasion from what they have actually done, to turn their thoughts within, to make them acquainted with the plague of their own hearts, and lead them to feel that the word of God does indeed address them, when it says, "ye must be born again." And as to any repentance or reformation short of this, I shall most seriously assure them, it will avail nothing.

These are cutting, humbling truths, marring the beauty of all external virtue, where the heart retains its native alienation from God. They make the great force of that conviction, which the Holy Spirit produces, to relate to that very inbred, entire depravity of the heart, which is the subject of this controversy. Thus the doctrine, as I have exhibited it, is a practical truth, confirmed by Christian experience. They who, being thoroughly illuminated by the Spirit of God, judge themselves by the divine law, and receive salvation by grace, are as really convinced of this doctrine by their own experience, as by the plainest declarations of Scripture. And they who have this deep, heart-felt conviction, can no more be induced to deny the doctrine, than to deny any truth whatever which they know by their own consciousness.

But if I should deny the doctrine of innate depravity, and entertain those opinions of human nature which are set forth in the Letters to Trinitarians and Calvinists; my treatment of those, who transgress the rules of morality, would be materially different. I should indeed exhort them to repent and reform. But I should never occasion any uneasiness to their conscience, by directing their attention to the badness of the tree which bears bad fruit, or to the impurity of the fountain from

which impure streams flow. Only let them be careful to guard against those particular sins to which they have been inclined, and maintain a regular, decent behaviour; and I should bid them be quiet, and give no place to any gloomy apprehension respecting the necessity of an inward change. Thus the thing would pass off, without any great solicitude on my part, or on theirs.

I mean to treat this subject exactly according to truth. If I exaggerate or discolour any thing, and by such means do the least degree of injustice to those who differ from me; it is totally contrary to my intention; and the temper of mind which would lead to this, I most heartily reprobate. But if I mistake not, the general conduct of those ministers, who hold the opinions of the book, to which I have undertaken a reply, corresponds substantially with the representation I have made. Such I am well persuaded would be my conduct, should I adopt those opinions. If sinners, deeply convinced of their depravity, and of the total inefficacy of any reformation, or any doings of theirs, while their heart remains unrenewed—convinced too, that they are enemies to God, without excuse, ready to perish,—and suffering the agony of soul, which such conviction naturally produces; if sinners in this condition should come to me, and in the language of anxiety and distress should say, as multitudes, through the mercy of God, are constantly saying to their ministers, *what shall we do to be saved?*—I should indeed pity fellow creatures in such distress; but at the same time, if I entertained the sentiments of Unitarians, I should endeavour to satisfy them, that their distress was without reason, and was occasioned by false views of religion, or by some fright of imagination, or some derangement of the nervous system. I should labour to relieve their sense of guilt, their anxiety and fear, by in-

culcating more comforting views of the nature which God has given them, of the service he requires of them, and of the treatment they have a right to expect at his hand. In a word, I should look upon such persons to be in a state more deeply to be deplored, than if they were living in fashionable vice, totally regardless of God and eternity.—If there are any ministers, who embrace the prevailing system of Unitarianism, but still do not feel and converse thus in reference to such cases ; I rejoice that they have something within them to counteract an influence, which I am persuaded would produce upon *me* all the effect above described.

The denial of man's innate corruption must have a direct influence on our views of the nature and necessity of *the divine influence*. It may indeed seem desirable to Unitarians, that God should afford to men all the assistance they need in regulating their passions, and in pursuing a course of virtuous conduct. But their scheme implies that, comparatively, but little divine aid is necessary. It ascribes to the Holy Spirit no such achievements, as we ascribe to him, when the heart is renewed, and the sinner savingly converted. When rebels against God—when those who have felt an entire hostility to the spiritual religion of the Gospel, become penitent and humble, friends to God, and obedient to his law ; the work performed by the Spirit of God has, in our view, a greatness and glory, which entitle it to the admiration of heaven and earth. But in what language do Unitarians describe it ?

In regard to the whole of religion, our belief of human depravity has an influence on the mind, of the highest moment. It is one of the elements of a holy life. It produces in Christians a strong conviction, that, in respect to their good affections, their duties, and their

enjoyments, they are in a state of total dependance on the Spirit of God. They apprehend their moral disease to be so deep-wrought in their nature, that it will yield, in no degree, to any power, but that which is divine. If they have any degree of holiness, they ascribe it, not to any goodness of disposition naturally belonging to them, but to the grace of God. To God alone they give the honour of all their success in resisting temptation, in subduing the evils of their hearts, in cultivating pious affections and habits, and in doing good to their fellow creatures. They are fully convinced that, without his effectual operation, they can have nothing truly excellent in their character or life ; nothing consoling in affliction, or peaceful in death. In the best moral state which they ever attain on earth, they perceive so much want of conformity to God's perfect law,—so much unlikeness to their Saviour, that the language of the Apostle becomes the sober expression of their feelings ; “ O wretched men that we are ! Who shall deliver us from the body of this death ? ” Thus they are led, as Jeremy Taylor directs, “ so to live as if they were always under a physician's hand.” In short it is manifest, that those Christians, who admit, in all its extent, and with suitable impressions on their own minds, the Orthodox doctrine of depravity, must find in it a variety of motives, powerfully constraining them to constant and fervent prayer, to self-denial, to a godly jealousy over their own hearts, to a watchful avoidance of every thing which can minister to their moral corruption, and to efforts of the greatest intensity, to “ put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” I must decline here, as I did in my Letters, any formal comparison between the gen-

eral character exhibited by the Orthodox, and that exhibited by Unitarians. Indeed I am perfectly ready to confess, that among those who profess to believe the common doctrine of depravity, and even among those who preach it, instances of wickedness sometimes occur of the most hateful aspect, and stamping the perpetrators with indelible infamy. These instances I regard as painful proofs of that very corruption, that deep, inveterate corruption of human nature, which has been under discussion. At the same time I contend, that the cordial belief of the doctrine tends to produce, and actually has produced all the salutary influence above described; and that those views of the human character, which my opponents attempt to vindicate, lead on to all the hurtful consequences which I have suggested.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. CHANNING and others have accused the Orthodox generally of maintaining certain opinions on the subject of Election. We have repelled the accusation, by saying, that *we do not maintain those opinions*. Dr. Ware's apology for Mr. Channing is this;—if the Orthodox “do not maintain the opinions, against which the sermon of Mr. Channing is directed, there seems to have been no good reason why they should feel themselves at all concerned in the charge. Calvinists only who *do* maintain them, can fairly consider their opinions as attacked, and themselves called upon to defend them.” This apology would have been satisfactory, if Mr. Channing had directed his sermon against *opinions* merely, and not against *men*. But as

the charges contained in the sermon are made against *the Orthodox*, we have this to do with them at least, that is, to declare them untrue. And as Mr. Channing has been distinctly informed that we disclaim the sentiments which he has charged and has been understood to charge upon us ; it would be no unnatural expectation, that *he* would have something to do, besides repeating such groundless charges. Indeed it has become a question of difficult solution with many, how it can be reconciled with fairness or integrity for him to continue, without abatement or correction, to publish charges, by which the great body of Christians in the world are really as much injured, as he himself would be, if the same charges were published against him.

It must not be forgotten that the doctrine of Election, which Orthodox Christians believe, and Orthodox Ministers preach, is not the doctrine, which our opposers ascribe to us. The picture which Unitarians and Arminians draw of the doctrine is, in its *essential features*, very unlike the doctrine which we maintain. John Wesley says, and one of his late biographers thinks he has stated the case with equal force and truth ; “The sum of all is this.; one in twenty (suppose) of mankind, are elected ; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, *do what they will* ; the reprobate shall be damned, *do what they can.*” Now the fact is, that human ingenuity could not make a representation of the doctrine, more uncandid, distorted, or false. And if, after all the explanations which have been given of our doctrine, any man still chooses to represent it in this manner, I will leave it to him to assign his reasons for doing so.

In my Letters, I represented the doctrine of Election, in a general view, as implying *the eternal purpose of God*

respecting his own acts in the work of redemption ; that is, the eternal purpose of God to do what he actually does in saving sinners. Dr. Ware thinks no Unitarian would dissent from this form of the doctrine. It would seem then, from this concession of his, that the eternal purpose of God, as we understand it, is thought by Unitarians to differ, in some important respects, from *what really takes place*, and that it is on this account simply, that they object to our doctrine. If this should prove to be the case, the limits of the controversy would be very much narrowed ; as all the objections against the doctrine of an eternal purpose, from its alleged inconsistency with man's freedom and accountableness, with the invitations of the gospel, &c. would be superseded, and the simple inquiry would be, whether our doctrine gives a representation of the Divine purpose, correspondent to the facts which occur in divine providence.

The *existence* of an *eternal purpose* in a mind possessed of *eternal intelligence*, is self-evident. And nothing is more certain from Scripture, than that God eternally entertained a design respecting human salvation. As to this there can be no dispute. And it is equally clear, that the purpose of God must correspond with what actually takes place ; so that, by observing what comes to pass in divine providence, we learn not merely that there was a purpose in the divine mind, but what that purpose was. The events which take place show us at once, what God actually does, and what were his purposes. This, then, I lay down, and repeat, as a universal truth, and a truth of special importance in this controversy, that God's purposes respecting the salvation of men, and all other subjects, correspond perfectly with his administration, or rather, that *his administration corresponds with his purposes*.

There can be no unforeseen occurrence, no event not predetermined. I would say then, in pursuance of the views expressed in my Letters, and to make the subject still more plain, that so far as the acts of the divine administration are right, the divine purposes are right. In the discussion of this subject therefore, I find it most convenient and satisfactory, to fix my attention on *the divine administration*, which is a visible, definite thing, actually exhibited before me, and from that to regulate my opinions respecting the divine purposes. If I find what God does in the government of the world, for what ends he does it, and in what order ; I learn what was the plan of the divine mind from eternity. If the acts of the divine administration are holy, just, and good ; equally holy, just, and good is the divine purpose respecting those acts. So that whatever there may be in our doctrine which is exceptionable, it cannot be our believing that God has a purpose, or that his purpose is eternal and immutable. For if the thing purposed, that is, the divine administration is wise and benevolent ; the purpose also is wise and benevolent. And it is surely far enough from being a dishonour to God, that he should eternally and unchangeably entertain a wise and benevolent design. Nor can our doctrine be excepted to, because we maintain that the purpose of God relates to *all events* which take place. For if all events do in fact take place in such a manner as is consistent with the perfections of God ; then clearly, his purposing that they should take place in just such a manner is equally consistent with his perfections. It is then altogether unreasonable to object to the declaration in the Catechism, that God has “foreordained whatsoever comes to pass ;” that is, that his purpose extends to all events in his administration. For if every part of his

administration is right ; his having *purposed* every part is right. There is then no danger of carrying the doctrine of the divine purposes, *properly understood*, to too great an extent. For it is as proper for God to determine *all* his own acts, and *all* that shall result from them, as to determine a part, if all are as wise and good as a part. I say then, that no man in his senses can think we carry the doctrine too far, when we assert that God predetermines every thing which is comprised in his whole administration. There is indeed something faulty in our doctrine of the divine purposes, if we say that God determines any particular thing, which in fact he never does determine, and which never takes place ; or if we say he determines it in a different manner from that in which it actually takes place ;—in other words, if we give a representation of the divine purposes, which, in one respect or another, does not agree with the divine administration. For example ; if we should maintain that God determined to save Judas, or to cast off Paul ; we should be chargeable with an error, in maintaining that God determined what in fact he did not determine, and what never took place. Or if we should say, God determined to cast off and punish Judas for any reason, but for his wickedness ; we should be chargeable with misrepresenting the proximate reason of that particular purpose. And our mistake would be of the same nature, if we should maintain that God determined to bestow the rewards of heaven upon Paul, without any regard to his holy character and actions. And as to his character, we should mistake, if we should maintain, that God determined it should be formed in any way, except that in which it was really formed. My inquiry is, how was the character of Paul and of Judas actually formed ? Under

the influence of what causes, or series of events ; and in what circumstances? The actual formation of character in such circumstances, and under such an influence, exactly answers to the divine purpose ; and the divine purpose, to be stated correctly, must be stated as agreeing, in all respects, with what thus actually occurs in the course of divine providence. By fixing our thoughts in this manner on the things which really come to pass, and on the *order* and *manner* in which they come to pass, we may arrive at a view of the divine purposes, which is liable to no uncertainty, and no difficulty.

These remarks are as applicable to the purpose of God, which is called Election, as to any other. I have represented Election, in a general view, as *the purpose of God to do just what he actually does in saving sinners*, and to do it in the manner in which he actually does it. To this Dr. Ware thinks there is no objection. He allows then, that there is an eternal, immutable purpose of God respecting human salvation. And he must allow that God eternally purposed *all* which he actually does in the work of salvation. We cannot make God's purpose either too extensive or too particular, if we make it agree entirely with his work. Now God does in fact save a certain number of human beings. At the judgment day, Christ will say to the multitude on his right hand, consisting of a *certain, definite number of individual believers*, "come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." God must have eternally designed to do just what he does in the present life, and what he will do at the judgment day ; that is, he must have designed to save that same definite number of individuals. And if we thus represent the divine purpose as agreeing

with the divine acts, no one can have the least reason to object to our doctrine, because we assert that God eternally designed to save just such a number of human beings, and just such individuals. For is it not granted that God's purpose and his acts perfectly agree ; or that he eternally purposed to do just what he actually does in time ? Now God actually saves a definite number of *individuals*. He saves *that definite number*, and *no more, or less*. He must then have determined to do it. If any man denies this, he must say, either that God does not in fact save a certain definite number of individuals, or that he does this without previously intending to do it.

By these remarks I wish to make it clear to every reader, that there can properly be no dispute respecting the doctrine of the divine *purposes*, taken by itself. The controversy really respects the divine administration. The proper inquiry is, *what God actually does*. If we agree in this, we shall of course agree as to his purposes. By conducting the controversy in this way, we shall simplify the subject of inquiry, and free it at once from more than half its perplexity.

My object in this chapter is not to attempt a particular and full discussion of the subject, but merely to exhibit, in its outlines, the manner in which I think the doctrine may be satisfactorily stated and defended, and in which it may be effectually guarded against the difficulties which are supposed to attend it, and the misconstructions often put upon it. If we take care first to learn from scripture and observation, what God actually does, and in what manner he does it ; we can have no difficulty in passing from this to a correct and satisfactory view of his purposes. In this way it is easy to correct

various mistakes which have been made in stating the doctrine. Do you ask whether the doctrine of Election implies, that *only a small part of mankind are chosen to salvation*? To make out a proper answer, we first inquire whether there is any thing in the word of God, which shows this. And here we do indeed find some passages, which declare the small number of good men who lived at particular times ; but none which declare that there will be only a small number saved, in reference to the whole human race from the beginning to the end of the world. The word of God plainly teaches the contrary. Secondly. We inquire what our own observation and the history of past ages teach. Here we think the evidence clear, that, through all generations past, only a small part, comparatively, of the human species, have been saved from sin. But this proves nothing as to the proportion that will be saved, of our whole race. There is abundant reason to believe that, in the ages to come, it will be exceedingly different from what it has been heretofore. Hence we conclude that the Scripture doctrine of Election does not imply, that only a small part of mankind are chosen to salvation. It is therefore a manifest error, to state the doctrine thus. And any one who gets advantage against it from such a view, gets it unfairly. And any one who justifies the representation often made of our doctrine in this respect, justifies what may justly be called *religious calumny*.

Again. Does the Scripture doctrine of Election imply, that the elect will be saved, let them do what they will ; that is, whether they repent, and obey the gospel, or not ? Here, according to our general principle, we consult the Scriptures to learn what God actually does. The question must be considered in two views. First ;

making salvation mean the blessedness of heaven, we inquire whether God admits men to this, without any regard to their character and conduct. Every thing in the Bible stands against such a notion. Heaven is granted only to the penitent, the obedient, the holy. Secondly; salvation may denote the *regeneration* or *first conversion* of sinners. Agreeably to this view, the question stands thus; does God renew sinners, or begin the work of salvation in them, on account of their previous character or conduct? The Bible and observation both teach that he does not. Men possessing all the varieties of character which the world has exhibited, have been converted, or brought to repentance. If I should name Saul of Tarsus as an instance, my opponents might object, and say, it was a *miracle*. My reply would be, that God works no miracle, which violates the principles of a just administration of government; and that Paul makes no such distinction between himself and others, but expressly represents his case, as a pattern to others who should afterwards believe. 1 Tim. i. 15, 16. So that his declaration is obviously just, in regard to *Christians generally*, that God first calls them and saves them from sin, “not according to their works but according to his own purpose and grace.” This we consider as a universal truth. Whenever God first makes men holy, he must do it without regard to any goodness in them. He can look at no “works of righteousness which they have done,” but must act from the impulse of his own infinite love. And we are to view the purpose of God in relation to this subject, as in all respects corresponding to the manner of his acting. It seems then perfectly clear, that God did not determine to regenerate men, or make them holy, from any foresight of repentance, faith, or good works,

“as conditions or causes moving him thereunto.” The *first* production of holiness cannot surely have respect to any *previous* holiness. But I could not say, in the same sense, that God determined to give men the blessedness of heaven, without any foresight of repentance or good works, as conditions; because the Bible represents repentance and good works, and perseverance in them, as necessary conditions of final happiness. And if God now in fact makes them conditions, he must have regarded them as such, in his eternal purpose. That act of divine grace which, so far as the conduct of sinners is concerned is *wholly unconditional*, is, as I understand it, the first formation of a holy character, or the commencement of real goodness in the heart. Without enlarging here, I would just say, in accordance with the general principle laid down above, and more fully expressed in my Letters, that the divine purposes are just as conditional, and in the same sense, as the divine acts.

If then there is any objection against our doctrine of the divine purposes, the objection must in reality lie against what we assert to be matter of fact in the divine administration. The two things, which seem to be regarded as particularly objectionable, are, 1, That the conversion and salvation of men is a matter of mere grace, all regard to personal merit being excluded; 2, That the grace of God in the conversion of sinners is distinguishing; in other words, that it is so dispensed, that of those who are equally unworthy of favour, and equally deserving of punishment, some are renewed, and others not.

The proper way to dispose of the first of these particulars, is to place it by the side of those texts, which describe the moral character and state of all men, as

by nature entirely sinful, and those which represent the death of Christ, as the grand procuring cause of all the good conferred on human beings, and those which declare, that salvation is wholly of grace, to the exclusion of all works of righteousness. To these texts, I might add others which show the actual views of good men respecting themselves; and then might refer to the feelings of Christians generally.

As to the second point, namely, the difference among men equally undeserving;—it is clear that we cannot properly decide against it; because with our limited and obscure views, we cannot possibly determine that infinite wisdom may not see it to be necessary to make such a difference in order to the highest interests of the universe. To say that, because we can see no reasons for it, therefore there are none, would ill become creatures like us. It is easy to show from Scripture, that such a difference has been made, and from common observation, that it is now made. That divine grace, actually makes a difference among those who are equally sinful, renewing some and not others, is a plain, historic fact, just as well attested, as that God makes a difference, with respect to longevity, among men who live in the same climate, and possess equal vigor of natural constitution.

I am fully aware of the objection, that making such a difference is *unjust*. My first remark in relation to this objection is, that if it is in fact *unjust* to make the difference, it cannot be admitted that God would ever do it in a single instance. For God will no more do injustice in a single instance, than in ten thousand instances. But I think it is generally admitted by my opponents, that a difference like what I have asserted, has been made in some extraordinary instances, as that of Paul and Mary

Magdalene. But can they mean to admit that God does, in any instance whatever, commit an act of injustice?

But *to whom is it unjust* for God to make such a difference? To those who are saved? Our opponents will not say this. The injustice which they allege, must relate to those who perish. But how is the bestowment of gratuitous blessings on *others*, any injustice to *them*? I might rather say, how can it be unjust to inflict on them an evil which they deserve, or to withhold a favour which they deserve not?

Dr. Ware endeavours to show that the method of designating the heirs of salvation, which the doctrine of Election implies, can neither be reconciled with our natural notions of the moral government of God, derived from the use of the faculties he has given us, and our observation of his conduct in the government of the world, nor with what he has made known to us of his character, and purposes, and government in the Christian revelation."

His first objection is from our natural conceptions and feelings. "Following," he says, "the light of our reason and the natural impulse of our feelings, we find it impossible to imagine, that the Author of our being can regard and treat his offspring in the manner, which the doctrine in question attributes to him."

This argument it is evident can have no weight, if it is found, that our natural conceptions and feelings are so disordered, as not to be a safe guide. Human reason, when freed from wrong bias, and properly instructed, and the feelings of the heart, when sanctified by the divine Spirit, do, in my apprehension, perfectly approve every thing contained in the doctrine of Election. That reason, disordered as it is by sin, should mistake on this subject, is no more strange, than that it should mistake

on a thousand other subjects. And that the feelings of a world, which lieth in wickedness, should rise up against the purpose of God in respect to salvation, is no more strange, than that they should rise up, as they do, against various dispensations of divine providence. “The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord.” I allow, indeed, that the doctrine of Election, *as set forth by Dr. Ware*, p. 59, admits of no defence. He represents it as implying, that without any foreseen difference of character and desert in men, God regarded some with complacency and love, and others, with disapprobation and hatred and wrath;” that is, that God regarded *with complacency* that same character in the elect, which, in the non-elect, he regarded *with disapprobation* and *hatred*. This representation has no resemblance to the Orthodox doctrine. It is an imagination, a shadow. Any man will be convinced of this, who examines what Dr. Ware quotes from my Letters, or from the Westminster Divines. Our doctrine is, that God regards those sinners who are to be saved, not with *approbation*, or *complacency*, but with that *benevolence*, or *compassion*, which is perfectly consistent with the highest *disapprobation*; that he chooses them to salvation through sanctification of the spirit; that he determines to renew them, and so to *make* them objects of his complacency; they being naturally objects of his strongest disapprobation. We maintain that God regards things just as they are. And any representation of our opponents, different from this, is at variance with our doctrine.

I must make similar remarks on another clause, p. 59, in which we are represented as holding that, “without any reference to the future use or abuse of their nature, God appoints some to everlasting happiness, and the rest

to everlasting misery ; and that this appointment, entirely arbitrary, is the cause, not the consequence of holiness in the one, and of the defect of holiness in the other." Our doctrine does not imply, that God appoints some to happiness and others to misery, without any reference to their future conduct. We maintain that God does, indeed, give the blessedness of heaven to his people, as an *unmerited gift*,—that is, without seeing any thing in their character which renders them *deserving* of such a gift ; but not without a regard to that *holiness* in them, which is a necessary *qualification* for heaven. He does not admit them to heaven, *as impenitent, unholy*. He first makes them holy ; and then receives them to heaven. In his purpose he determines things in the same order.

As to the non-elect, God will actually doom them to punishment, not without reference to their character and conduct, but *because they have been workers of iniquity*. He will do it for this reason, and for this only. And for this same reason, he predetermines to do it. So the Westminster Divines. "The rest of mankind God was pleased to ordain to dishonour and wrath, *for their sin*." If it is proper for God to *inflict* such an evil upon men for their sin, it is proper that he should previously determine to do it. No man can deny this. Yet we, who assert this, are charged with making God a monster of malevolence and caprice. And to give this charge some colour of truth, we are represented as asserting, that God appoints men to everlasting misery without any regard to their conduct ;—a thing as far from our belief, as atheism.

It really excites no small degree of surprise, that Dr. Ware should assert what follows, as though it were something different from the belief of the Orthodox and incompatible with the doctrine of Election. He says,

p. 64, "The final distinctions that are to be made between men, we are again and again told, are to be wholly according to the difference of moral character. It is that these are righteous, and those wicked ; these have done well, and those have done ill."—This is a view of the subject upon which I have insisted a thousand times, with more zeal than upon almost any other. This I consider to be one of those plain truths of revelation, which ought to limit and regulate our conceptions of other subjects, and I make it a rule, not to admit any views of the doctrine of Election or of salvation by grace, or of any other doctrine, inconsistent with this.

It would be aside from my present purpose to enlarge on this topic. The difficulty, at which Dr. Ware and others stumble, seems to arise from their not taking into view the whole subject. The Westminster Divines and the Orthodox generally say, that God not only appointed the elect to glory, but appointed *all the means thereunto*. This is the same as saying, that those whom he purposed to save, he purposed first to sanctify ; or in the language of Scripture, he chose them to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit. How, and in what order does God actually proceed in saving sinners ? First, he provides for them a Redeemer and invites them to accept him. Secondly, he calls them with a holy calling, leads them to repentance, pardons their sins, and by an effectual discipline prepares them for heaven ; and then he shows his approbation of them, and graciously rewards them. Their holiness is a condition, and on their part, the only condition of their title to heaven. Such is the order of God's acts in the salvation of sinners. Exactly answerable to this is the purpose of God. His purpose, perfectly wise and benevolent, is the exact counterpart of his administra-

tion. And as in his administration, the propriety of one event depends entirely upon its connexion with another; so it does in his purpose. And it is altogether unjust to represent that God predetermines *any event whatever*, without regard to its connexion with other events. It is neglecting that order and connexion of things, on which the character of the divine administration essentially depends. But it is from overlooking or denying this order and connexion, that the opposers of our doctrine get all their advantage against it. With these views, we cordially subscribe to the following declaration of Dr. Ware, though he seems to think our belief very different. "So far are the reasons of the final distinction to be made between those who are saved and those who perish, from being concealed in the divine mind, that nothing is more distinctly made known. The New Testament is full of it." I will only add, that it is, in my apprehension, revealed with equal clearness, that *God makes a difference among men in respect of character, without making known the reasons of what he does.*

But some of Dr. Ware's positions on this subject deserve more particular consideration. He says, p. 64, that "in the appointment of men to privileges and means, God has indeed given no account of his motives, nor assigned his reasons for the infinite variety that appears. He has exercised an absolute sovereignty, of which no account is given, and the reasons of which we are not competent to understand." And p. 76, he expresses his approbation of "a free and unconditional appointment to the participation of privileges." Now if Dr. Ware will look through this subject, as he has stated it, he may possibly discover as formidable difficulties, as those which attend our doctrine. For what is the *tendency* and *use* of means and privileges? Does not

their whole value consist in their influence upon the character? The word of God, which is the greatest and best of our privileges, and which makes the principal difference between Christians and heathens, is the means of turning men from sin, and bringing them to love and obey God. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." When God, in the exercise of that absolute sovereignty, which Dr. Ware ascribes to him, appoints one part of the human race, say the inhabitants of New England, to the enjoyment of the Scriptures and other religious means, he doubtless does it to promote virtue and piety, or to render men holy. And the actual consequence of these privileges is, that many become penitent and holy. Now does Dr. Ware see no difficulty in asserting that God, by an act of "absolute sovereignty," grants to some in distinction from others, privileges which are designed to produce, and to a certain extent, do in fact produce, a sanctifying effect upon their character?—privileges without which, according to the apostle, Rom. x, men cannot believe? In regard to the general difficulty, where is the difference between Dr. Ware's doctrine, and ours? We say, God determines to bring some men to repentance, and make them holy, and therefore gives them those means which, by his blessing, will produce the effect. According to Dr. Ware, God in the exercise of his *absolute sovereignty*, appoints some men in distinction from others, to the participation of those means, by which they are in fact, formed to holiness. Their holiness is the real and proper effect of the means which God gives them. And he would doubtless allow too, that God gives them these means, knowing infallibly what will be the consequence, and intending that just such a desirable consequence shall take place. Now is not this, in effect,

making a difference among men in respect of *character*, as well as of *means* and *privileges*? If means and privileges do not tend to make a difference in respect of character, of what value are they? Why are they bestowed? Dr. Ware would doubtless go as far as we, in extolling the happy consequences of the Christian revelation upon those communities which enjoy it. Those consequences respect moral and religious character chiefly. To give that revelation is to contribute directly, and in many cases effectually, to the formation of a holy character. And a previous determination to give that revelation is, in effect, a determination to make men holy. On the other hand, to withhold the Sacred Oracles and the other means of religion, is to leave men without any reasonable prospect of being brought to repentance. The truths and precepts and promises of Scripture are the only medicines, which can cure the moral diseases of men. To withhold the Scriptures is to leave men to the fatal influence of those moral diseases, thus rendered incurable. Had the inhabitants of Tyre and Sodom enjoyed the same means with those, who were favoured with the Scriptures and the personal ministry of Christ; "they would have repented." The means would have been, to a greater or less degree, effectual. If those means had been afforded to the inhabitants of one of those places, and not of the other; a difference between the inhabitants of those two places in point of moral character would unquestionably have been the consequence. In Great Britain and America there is a large number of enlightened and sincere worshippers of God, while among other equal portions of the human race in Asia and Africa, none can be found. How can this be accounted for? According to Dr. Ware, it must be ascribed to difference of circum-

stances. And difference of circumstances is traced by him to "the absolute sovereignty of God." Thus then his scheme stands. In "the exercise of absolute sovereignty," God has given some men and not others, the Scriptures and other means. These means are given for the very purpose of producing an effect on the character; and to a great extent they actually accomplish this purpose. The character, thus formed, determines the condition of men in the future world. In all the instances, in which men are thus turned from sin, and fitted for the kingdom of heaven, these things make a connected series;—means of moral culture,—formation of character,—condition in the future world. Condition in the future world depends on character; character, on the enjoyment of means; and the enjoyment of means, according to Dr. Ware, on "the absolute sovereignty of God." Now just so far as these things are connected, if God appoints one, he does in effect appoint the other; especially as the connexion itself, whatever it is, depends wholly on his will. And yet Dr. Ware objects strongly to considering God's appointment as relating either to men's character, or to their future condition. But why should he object? What difficulty can he feel in admitting that the appointment of God relates to all these,—and relates to them just in the order and manner in which they take place? The position which I would defend in relation to this subject, is, that *the purpose of God exactly agrees with the acts of his administration.* This is the faith of the Orthodox, though expressed in different ways. Some choose to say that God, by a sovereign act, first appointed the eternal condition of the elect; and then "appointed all the means thereunto;" that is, purposed to give them his word, and, by means of that word, to make them holy, and thus prepare them

for heaven. Others prefer a different order, and say, that God first determined to give men his word and make them holy, and then to bestow the rewards of holiness. But both come to the same thing. For according to the first, the design of God to receive men to heaven must be connected with a design to make them holy, and that must be connected with a design to give them the means of holiness. And according to the other, his design to give them the means of religion must be connected with a design to produce, by those means, a proper effect upon their character; that is, to make them holy; and his design to make them holy must be connected with his design to make them happy in his kingdom. Thus things are connected in fact; and thus, according to both statements, must they have been regarded in the divine purpose.

If with Dr. Ware and others, we should assert a *conditional* purpose of God, in regard to men's character; how should we be less encumbered with difficulty? God determined to make men holy on condition of their faithfully using the means he should afford them. But in respect to those, who will actually be saved, he knew that the condition would be performed. And he knew it would be performed, not as a matter of chance, but under the influence of proper causes,—causes of a moral nature,—causes wholly under his control, and deriving all their efficacy from him. Or thus. He determined to put them in such circumstances, to hold up such motives, and to exert such an influence, as he knew would persuade them, as moral agents, to use their privileges aright, and to obey the gospel. Now this is substantially, though not in form, the same with the doctrine of the Orthodox. They maintain, that God purposed to admit to heaven a certain number of our race. But how? As

unsanctified sinners? No; but in consequence of their previous deliverance from sin, and their preparation for heaven. Their possessing real holiness is an essential prerequisite to their being admitted into heaven; and, in this sense, must be regarded as a condition of their final happiness. The Orthodox maintain too, that God determined to make his people holy. But how? By a physical influence, operating upon them as machines? No; but by an influence suited to their moral nature. He determined to sanctify them *through the truth*. Now this statement of the subject is as honourable to God, as conformable to reason, scripture, and fact; and as free from difficulty, as the other.

The doctrine of Election is represented by my opponent as not reconcileable with the notions of the divine character, "which we derive from our observation of his conduct in the government of the world;" that is, it is not reconcileable with what we learn from fact. But my apprehension is, that fact helps to prove the doctrine. For what is fact? A difference really exists among men in respect of character. How is this difference to be accounted for? If it is *original*, or if it springs from any thing original in our nature, it must be traced to the purpose and agency of the Author of our nature. This Dr. Ware would by no means allow; and of course must say that the good and the bad are originally of the same character. I ask then for the cause of the present difference. Is it owing, as Dr. Ware in another place suggests, to education, example, and other outward circumstances? All these circumstances are ordered by divine providence. In the appointment of men to these, Dr. Ware asserts, that God "exercises an absolute sovereignty." And if it is more or less owing to means, privileges, and outward circumstances, that some men

are holy, while others are not ; the difference is, in the same degree, to be traced to what Dr. Ware calls the “absolute sovereignty of God.” But the characters of men, who have the *same* outward privileges, differ ; and it will be said by Dr. Ware, that this difference depends on the manner in which they use the means afforded them. Some men voluntarily use their faculties and privileges aright, and so acquire the habits of real goodness ; while others abuse their faculties and privileges, and exhibit the marks of obstinate wickedness. Suppose now this voluntary conduct to be the proximate cause of the difference existing among men in regard to character, and that a part of the human race become holy, because they rightly use their privileges. This right use of their privileges is, then, a *fact*,—and a fact on which their everlasting interest depends. How is this fact to be accounted for ? Is it owing to the influence of any causes, either physical or moral ?—Does it result from their disposition or choice ? How then is this disposition or choice to be accounted for ? The Scripture accounts for it by the divine influence. It represents God as working in men *both to will, and to do*. If Dr. Ware is satisfied with this mode of accounting for the fact, the controversy is ended. But if he should say, that the gracious influence of God is always granted on the condition of men’s having previously some right desire, or choice, or conduct ; I would ask again, how we are to account for that desire, choice, or conduct, which is not produced by the spirit of God ? Where shall we look for the cause ? Is the right desire or choice owing to the influence of motives ? And is it not God, who has given men a mind suited to be influenced by motives ? And does he not so order things in his providence, that those motives

shall be presented before them, which will effectually excite such a choice or desire?

Thus common observation first leads us to notice what exists in fact,—what God does in his providence with respect to the characters, and consequently with respect to the future condition of men; and from this we infer what his design was.

To the following remark of Dr. Ware it is hardly necessary to make any additional reply. He says, that according to our doctrine, what men are to be and how they are to act, is determined beforehand, without any reference to their exertions. A strange notion truly, since it is impossible to conceive that men should *be any thing*, or *act in any way whatever*, without including their exertions.

Dr. Ware thinks that God's sovereign appointment of the everlasting condition of men is "inconsistent with all that implies the influence of motives." But he could not have thought so, if he had only considered the divine purpose as agreeing exactly with fact; and, finding it a fact that moral agents are, and from the nature of the case must be, influenced by motives, had concluded, that God's appointment was, that they *should be influenced* by motives just as they are. The position of our opponents if well examined, will evidently amount to this,—that *God's determining* that men shall act from motives, *hinders* them from acting in this manner; that his determining that they shall be moral, accountable agents, makes it impossible they should be so. Whereas we have been very much inclined to think, that God's determination, if it has any influence, must tend to *accomplish* the thing determined, not to *prevent* it.

This subject is placed in a very clear light by those texts which show, that men have acted with perfect

freedom and voluntariness, while fulfilling the divine purpose. The apostles declare, Acts iv. 26, 27, 28, that the murderers of Christ did what *the hand and counsel of God determined before to be done*. But did they act without motives? Here is a plain case. In those very actions, which were predetermined, they were influenced by motives, and were in all respects moral, accountable agents. Nor is this a singular case. So far as our subject is concerned, it is on a level with a thousand other instances of wickedness,—yea, with all the instances which have ever occurred. From the single case of Pharaoh, the Apostle draws arguments to establish a general principle; that is, he considers the conduct of God in respect to Pharaoh, as proving that the same conduct would be proper in respect to others. So I reason here. If God predetermined the actions of those who crucified the Saviour, he must have predetermined the actions of other sinners. This none can reasonably deny, unless they can offer some satisfactory reason why God should determine the actions of Christ's enemies, but not of others. And if the enemies of Christ, whose actions were predetermined, were still influenced by motives, and were in the highest degree moral agents; so may *others* be, whose actions were predetermined.

In some respects, Dr. Ware well illustrates the general principle for which I contend, in a passage of his Fourth Letter, p. 78. Speaking of the design of God in raising up Pharaoh, he says; "How did God actually show his power in him, and make him the instrument of his glory? It was by giving him the opportunity to act out his character; by allowing him full scope for displaying the incorrigible obstinacy of his disposition, and by then inflicting upon him exemplary punishment for the instruction and warning of mankind; thus making

him the instrument of promoting some of the best purposes of heaven, in the free and voluntary exercise of his power." Here the perfect consistency of free and voluntary action with the accomplishment of God's purpose is fully asserted.

It will be seen then, how little reason Dr. Ware has for what he has written, p. 61, 62, in which he represents the Orthodox doctrine as inconsistent "with all that implies the influence of motives"—"with all that implies guilt, ill-desert, blame-worthiness in the disobedient"—"and with all those promises, threatenings, warnings, &c. which imply in those to whom they are addressed, a power of being influenced."—If the divine purpose leaves men, I should rather say *makes* them, *free, moral agents*, as we see is implied in the case of Pharaoh and the murderers of Christ; they are certainly capable of being influenced by *motives*, so that promises, threats, warnings, &c. are proper and useful; and if guilt can exist in any case, it may here.

Dr. Ware says, p. 62, that this doctrine "represents God as unjust,—exactng endless punishment for sins committed in following the nature which he had given us, and acting in pursuance of his decree." I reply. If sin exists, it must be committed in following our dispositions, or the propensities of our nature. And I have before shown, that the circumstance of our dispositions or propensities being natural or original, cannot render them, or the actions resulting from them, less criminal. As to the other part; can Dr. Ware, after giving the explanation, above quoted, of the divine conduct respecting Pharaoh, think it unjust for God to punish men for sins they commit, while acting in pursuance of his purpose? Did not Joseph's brethren, though their hearts meant not so, act in pursuance of God's purpose? Did not

those who carried the Israelites into captivity, and those who murdered the Prince of life, act according to God's purpose? And was God unjust and cruel in punishing them?

I regret that Dr. Ware has made use of expressions and arguments like those above recited. They are such as men of liberal minds, who examine subjects profoundly, and judge without prejudice, ought never to employ. It would be easy enough, by means equally plausible, to oppose those doctrines of Scripture, which Dr. Ware believes, and to discredit the Scripture itself.

I will allow myself here to turn aside from the book, to which I am attempting a reply, just to notice the ravings of one of the most able opposers of the doctrine of Election. To those who assert this doctrine, he says; "You represent God as worse than the Devil; more false, more cruel, more unjust. But you say, you will prove it by Scripture. Hold! What will you prove by Scripture? that God is worse than the Devil?"—"Upon the supposition of this doctrine, one might say to our adversary the Devil, thou fool, why dost thou roar about any longer? Hearest thou not that God hath taken thy work out of thy hands, and that he doth it more effectually?"—"Oh how would the enemy of God and man rejoice to hear these things were so! How would he lift up his voice and say, to your tents, O Israel! flee from the face of this God.—But whither will ye flee? Into heaven? He is there. Down to hell? He is there also. Ye cannot flee from an omnipresent, omnipotent tyrant."

My apology for introducing these extracts from Wesley is, that the Reviewers in the *Christian Disciple* for Nov. and Dec. 1820, profess to have perfect fellowship, on this subject, with one, whom they consider

as mad with enthusiasm, and call this strain of violent misrepresentation, scurrility, and outrage, "an overwhelming flood of eloquence as well as argument."

Our opposers are much inclined to look at the difficulties and objections, which attend our doctrine of the divine purpose respecting the characters of men. Why will they not pay equal attention to the difficulties, which attend the *denial* of this doctrine? If they deny that the characters of men exist in accordance with the eternal purpose of God; they must maintain either that God had no design at all in regard to their characters, or else that he designed they should be different from what they really are. Will you say, God had no determination respecting the moral characters of men? Then he could have had no determination respecting any of those natural or moral causes, which contribute to form their character. And if so, then he could have had no determination respecting "the privileges, means, and external condition" of men, to which it is perfectly obvious their characters are generally owing. But Dr. Ware asserts that God has appointed men's privileges, means and external condition, *with absolute sovereignty*. So it comes to this; he has appointed every thing, which can operate as a cause or means of moral character—every thing to which the formation of character can be traced, but has carefully abstained from determining what the *character* shall be. And why? Because his determining what it shall be would be inconsistent with its being what he determined.

But if you say, God *had* a determination respecting the characters of men, but that his determination was that they should be different from what they are; then God is disappointed. But every disappointment must

be owing to some defect of wisdom or power, and of course must belong to an imperfect being. Let any man who denies our doctrine, take which position he pleases,—either that God has no design at all respecting men's characters; or, that he designed they should be different from what they are in fact; and let him compare the difficulties attending either of these positions with those which attend the only remaining position, namely, that of the Orthodox above stated.

I pass over many things in Dr. Ware's Letters, of the same general nature with those on which I have already remarked, and proceed to notice the manner in which he attempts to invalidate my arguments from Scripture.

My first argument was founded on those passages, particularly in John xvii, in which Christ speaks of a part of mankind, as given him of the Father. As an example I quoted verse 2. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." The sense which I gave to the text was this; that the Father has given to Christ a part of the human race, and that those who are thus given to Christ, are the persons who shall have eternal life.

Dr. Ware thinks our Saviour could not have meant to assert the common doctrine of Election in this text, because in Chapter xv, "he addresses the same persons of whom he here speaks as given him of the Father, in language implying that they might abide in him and bring forth fruit, or failing to abide in him, might be taken away," &c. "But," he says, "according to the doctrine in question, there could be no such contingency in the case." The reasoning is this. If God had a real design to save those particular persons, whom he finally

does save, Christ could not have exhorted his disciples as he did, to abide in him, and enforced his exhortation by telling them the plain truth as to the consequences of their faithful adherence to him, and the consequences of their forsaking him. Which is the same as saying, if God does certainly determine to save a particular number of human beings, he cannot speak to them in the language of direction, exhortation, and warning,—cannot address them with motives,—cannot do any thing to excite their hopes or fears, or persuade them to obedience. And all this seems to me to be the same as saying,—if God determines to train up a certain number of men for eternal life, he cannot use proper means to carry his determination into effect. I must confess that all the reason, which it has pleased God to give me, leads to a conclusion directly opposite. If God really determines to guide a certain number of men in the way to heaven, it seems reasonable to expect, that he will use the means best suited to accomplish his determination. And admitting those who are to be saved, to be moral agents, I should think that God would of course, make use of all those precepts, warnings, promises and threats, by which moral agents are most effectually influenced. What would Dr. Ware say, if we should apply the reasoning he relies upon in this case, to events in the natural world. The reasoning would stand thus. If God certainly determines to give us an abundant harvest, it will be altogether inconsistent for him to cause the sun to shine or rain to descend, or to use any other means to secure that harvest which he has determined to give. And I am sure it is equally absurd to reason thus in regard to the moral world. If God determines to accomplish an event of a moral nature, I ask whether it is consistent that he should use any means whatever; and

then, whether it is consistent for him to use those which are suited to moral agents. The remaining question would be, whether warnings, exhortations, promises, and threats, are suited to influence moral agents. It must be perfectly obvious, that they can be influenced in no other way; and that if God determines to bring a larger or smaller number of men to serve him faithfully, and so prepare them for future happiness, he must influence them to do it by such means as those above mentioned, or not at all;—unless men cease to be moral agents, and become capable of being moved like senseless machines. We see then, that the very thing which Dr. Ware thinks conclusive against the doctrine of Election, naturally and necessarily results from it, supposing it to be true. We see also, that all the contingency, which is implied in the use of exhortations, conditional promises, and threats, is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of Election.

If it were necessary still farther to defend the position I have taken in regard to the use of means, I could easily adduce particular instances, in which it appears from Scripture, that God has actually determined the characters and actions of men, and yet, in those very instances, has made use of all the means suited to moral agents, and made use of them in such a manner as to carry his determination into effect.

Those who urge the above-named objection against our doctrine, commit one great mistake; that is, they do not consider that the divine purposes, like all parts of the divine administration, respect men, *as moral agents*, and are accomplished by a system of moral means, exactly suited to operate upon such agents. Did they not lose sight of this plain principle, they could not help seeing, that it is just as consistent with our doctrine for God to use warnings, exhortations, promises and threats

to influence his people, as to give them *commands*, or to use proper means to accomplish any of his designs.

Another argument which Dr. Ware urges against my reasoning from the passage in John xvii, is, that in a previous chapter, we meet with the following sentence ; “For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me,” &c. John xvi. 27. “Here,” Dr. Ware says, “the love of God is represented, not as the cause, but as the consequence of the faith and love of the disciples.” This view is admitted, so far as the meaning of this particular text is concerned. But if we would understand the subject fully, we must compare this text with others, particularly with two passages from the same writer ; 1 John iv. 10, 19. “Not that we loved God, but that he loved us.” “We love him because *he first loved us.*” Dr. Ware thinks if our doctrine of Election or distinguishing grace is true, “it is impossible to see with what propriety it could be said of the elect, that God loved them, because of their love to Christ ; for his distinguishing love was, by that supposition, the *cause* of their love.” I contend that in a most important sense, it *was* the cause ; and that in the two texts last quoted, it is clearly represented in this light ; though in another sense, it is as represented in the passage cited by Dr. Ware ; that is, God’s love to Christians does, in the order of nature, follow their love to him. Now to avoid a contradiction between the different passages above cited, we must refer to a very obvious distinction between the different significations of the word *love*, as used in these passages. When we speak of the love of God in the sense in which it is used in the texts quoted from the Epistle, and elsewhere, that is, as *benevolence towards sinners, operating powerfully for their salvation*, we must consider it as the cause of their love to him, yea, the cause of

every thing excellent in their character, and every thing happy in their condition. And is it not common for devout Christians, of all denominations, to attribute all good in creatures to the benevolence or goodness of God? The love of God in this sense is mere good-will, kindness, compassion; and is exercised towards men, considered as sinners, or enemies. Of course, it implies no *approbation of their character*, no *complacency* in them. But the word, as used John xvi. 27, evidently denotes *complacency*, or *approbation*, and *actions expressive of it*, and so necessarily presupposes *moral good* in those who are its objects. They enjoy the divine *approbation*, because they love Christ. The love of God, thus understood, is the reward of our faith and piety; but it has no respect to the doctrine of Election; and the passage in John xvi. 27, can no more disprove the doctrine, than any other passage in the Bible. Thus the error, which lies at the bottom of Dr. Ware's reasoning on this subject, becomes obvious. He says; "If by those who are given to Christ we are to understand all to whom Christ will actually give eternal life, and this appointment to Christian faith and eternal life is wholly independent of any thing in them as the ground of this distinction from the rest of the world; it is impossible to see with what propriety it could be said, that God loved them, because of their love to Christ." But how impossible? God's love, here spoken of, most evidently does not signify his original act in choosing men to salvation, but his *approbation* of them and his peculiar favour towards them, in consequence of their faithful attachment to Christ. But how did he regard them *before* they had any love to Christ, and when they were *enemies*? Did he not look upon them with *benevolence* and *compassion*, and send his Son to die for them, and his spirit to renew them? It is

impossible for any one to show the least incompatibility between God's originally exercising infinite *benevolence* towards a part of mankind, and choosing them to holiness and salvation, independently of any thing in them as the ground of this distinction, and his regarding them *afterwards* with *complacency*, and manifesting himself to them as their friend, on account of their love and obedience to Christ.

Dr. Ware has another passage, p. 68, which must not pass without notice. He represents "coming to Christ, believing on him, &c. as events not flowing from a sovereign appointment of God, but the result of the faithful use of means, in the exercise of a right disposition, and that the difference of character thus appearing between Christians and others, is the ground, not the consequence of their being given to Christ." Now I ask whether it is not a doctrine clearly taught in many parts of the Bible, that believing in Christ, and the possession of a right disposition and character, are fairly to be ascribed to the divine influence as the cause? And if so, whether the effectual operation of that cause, being a divine act, must not have been before settled in the divine mind? Nothing can be more evident, than that the text, John vi. 37, represents coming to Christ as the consequence of being given to Christ. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me." Their *coming* follows as the consequence of their being *given*. So this mode of expression always means. There is an instance of it in the same verse. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." His not being cast out, i. e. his being accepted, is the consequence of his coming to Christ. And it is equally evident from this passage, that men's coming to Christ is the consequence of their being given to Christ. The mode of expression, here used,

always denotes, that the second thing mentioned is the consequence of the first. Thus we say, those who repent, shall be forgiven. All who seek God, shall find him. All who are pure in heart, shall see God. Whosoever believeth, shall have life. In all such cases, the meaning is undoubted. And so I think Dr. Ware would understand the phrase in John vi. 37, if instead of forcing the passage to agree with a preconceived opinion, he would attend to the established principles of interpretation. Suppose we should find in any book the following declaration ; *all who hear the gospel, shall be converted.* Or this ; *all who are born in a christian land, shall be saved.* Could we doubt that the writer meant in each case to assert that the latter would follow as the consequence of the former, and that the former would have a special influence in producing the latter. But Dr. Ware inverts the two parts of a sentence just like these, and makes that which is set forth as the consequence, to be the antecedent, or cause. The text is ; “ All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me.” Dr. Ware’s sense of it is ; *all who come to me, the Father shall give me.* He says, “ those only are given him of the Father, who come to Christ.”

I would just remark that the construction which Dr. Ware has put upon the text quoted, p. 70, at the bottom, overlooks the idiom of the New Testament, as might easily be shown.

The next passage I cited to prove the doctrine of Election, was Eph. i, 3—11. On supposition that the Apostle actually believed the doctrine as we do, it is inconceivable that he could have asserted it more plainly and emphatically, than he does in this passage. He teaches us that God had a purpose, or choice, respecting those who are saved ; and he teaches us what

the purpose or choice was. “He hath blessed us, &c.—*according as he hath chosen us in him, that we should be holy—having predestinated us to the adoption of children, &c.*” Here also we learn the date of the divine purpose; “before the foundation of the world.” 2 Tim. i. 9, is of the same general import. “Who hath saved us and called us, not according to our works, but *according to his own purpose and grace.*”

As the principle concerned in the interpretation of these passages must be considered of great consequence, and must determine the sense of other passages also, in relation to the same subject; I ask the attention of the reader to a particular investigation.

Dr. Ware undertakes to prove that the passage in Ephesians has no relation to the doctrine of Election. And one argument which he adduces to prove this, is, that the passage *refers not to individuals as such, but to the Christian community.*

I will begin the examination of this subject by admitting what Dr. Ware supposes, namely, that the passage relates to the Christian community, or, to Christians taken collectively. Now does this supposition remove any difficulty? If it is inconsistent for God to choose *individuals* to holiness and salvation; it is surely not less inconsistent for him to choose to the same blessings a large society of men. If any purpose or conduct relative to individuals is improper; certainly it cannot be less improper, because it relates to a community, comprising a large number of individuals. So that whatever the purpose or conduct, which Dr. Ware supposes to be ascribed to God in this passage; that same purpose or conduct must be as just and proper in regard to individuals, as in regard to a community. It seems to me impossible that any man should doubt this. On this

account it has long appeared to me utterly irrelevant, for the opposers of our doctrine to introduce this distinction between the choice of individuals, and the choice of a community. If in any respect a divine purpose in relation to individuals, is improper ; that divine purpose is, in the same respect, equally improper in relation to a community. There is no principle in ethics or theology, according to which an act of injustice or partiality towards individuals, changes its character when directed towards a community.

The fact that *a distinction is made*, occasions certainly as great difficulty, when considered in relation to a community, as in relation to individuals. It is indeed an affair of great magnitude for particular persons to be chosen to enjoy important blessings, while others are passed by, and left without those blessings. But certainly it is an affair of no less magnitude, for a community, or large society of men to be chosen to enjoy those blessings, and yet other communities be left without them. Whether the blessings intended are temporal or spiritual, the distinction which the divine purpose makes must occasion as great difficulty, when it relates to communities, as when it relates to individuals ;—as great surely, when it relates to the larger object, as when it relates to the less. I confess I should much sooner think of objecting to the purpose of God, or any distinction he makes in his providence respecting large bodies of men, than respecting individuals. I say then that whatever may be the nature of that eternal purpose of God which is spoken of in the text, and whatever blessings it secures to some in distinction from others ; it is wholly without use for Dr. Ware to say, that purpose relates to communities, not to individuals ; since upon any supposition the same divine purpose or conduct can-

not be less objectionable, when it relates to communities or nations, than when it relates to individuals. It is the opinion of Dr. Ware, that the divine purpose or choice spoken of, refers to temporal blessings, or to religious privileges, means and opportunities. Be it so then, just as he supposes. I ask what occasion he can have to represent it as relating to *communities*, and not to *individuals*; since he must be as well satisfied, as I am, that *such* a divine purpose may with perfect propriety relate to individuals. And on the other hand, if the divine purpose spoken of by the Apostle is to be understood as securing the actual bestowment of spiritual blessings, that is, sanctification, pardon, and eternal life, upon those who are its objects; then surely Dr. Ware must find as many difficulties in supposing, that *such* a purpose relates to a community, as to individuals. Why then has this distinction been made? What end does it answer? And why is it so much relied upon by Dr. Ware and others in their reasoning against the doctrine of Election?

Thus I have endeavoured to show that if the purpose of God mentioned above, should be understood to refer not to individuals, but to the Christian community; it would still be of no use to Dr. Ware's argument. But there are reasons, which seem to me quite conclusive against this.

First. A community is a collection of *individuals*, who retain perfectly their individual existence, properties, and relations. Now is it possible, that any purpose or conduct of God should refer to a *community*, or *society* of *men* without referring to the *individuals* of whom that society is composed? Is it possible, for example, that a *community* should be visited with sickness or famine, and yet the *individuals*, who

compose that community, escape? Is it possible that a community should receive any *blessing*, and yet the individual members continue destitute of it? Is it possible that any *law* should be *obligatory* upon a public body of men, which yet is not obligatory upon the individuals composing that body? Is it possible that we should *love a society*, or that we should promote the welfare of a society, without loving its *members*, and promoting *their* welfare? How then could Dr. Ware think it proper to assert, that the purpose of God mentioned in the passage under consideration, relates *not to individuals*, but to the Christian community?

Nor can it be of any use to Dr. Ware's argument, for him to say, that this divine purpose does not relate "to individuals, as such;" that is, to individuals, *as individuals*, or in their individual capacity. Suppose we admit this. What then? The divine purpose does not refer to them in their *individual* capacity; still it must refer to them, *as members of the body*, or in their *collective* capacity. Now do men cease to be *men*, by being collected together in society? Do they lose any of their intellectual or moral powers? Does their existence or their happiness become less important? Do they not stand in the same relation to God? Have they not as good a title to a just and proper treatment from God in their *collective*, as in their *individual* capacity? If any purpose or act of God, which relates to men as individuals, is liable to a charge of injustice or partiality; certainly it is not less liable, if it relates to them as collected together in society; since after being thus collected, they retain all their relations to God, and have an undiminished right to expect from him all that is just and equal.

That the purpose of God referred to, could not af-

fect men as members of a community, without affecting them as individuals, will appear very evident, if we consider the *nature* of that divine purpose, and to *what kind of blessings* it related. The Apostle here speaks of Christians being chosen in Christ, *that they should be holy, —predestinated to the adoption of children,—having redemption through Christ's blood, the forgiveness of sins, and having obtained an inheritance.* This is the nature of the divine purpose or choice. These are the blessings to which it related. Now of which of these blessings can it be said, that it respects Christians not *as individuals*, but *as a community*? Is not a man *holy* in his individual capacity? Is he not adopted to be *a child of God*, as an individual? Do not a man's *sins* belong to him as an individual; and must not *forgiveness* respect him as an individual? And is it not as an individual, that a man is *redeemed*, and made *an heir of heaven*? There is no blessing here spoken of, which is of such a nature, that it can relate to men in any other capacity, than *as individual moral agents*.

But Dr. Ware says, the passage now before us, refers “not to final salvation, but to Christian privileges.” It is indeed true that being made “holy,” “forgiveness,” and “redemption through the blood of Christ,” are Christian *privileges*. But they are privileges connected with “final salvation,” and evidently involving it. And in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, the Apostle expressly mentions salvation, as the blessing secured by the divine purpose,—a salvation attained through sanctification of the spirit. “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” Does not this refer to final salvation? And does not the predestination spoken of,

Rom. viii. 29, 30, refer to final salvation? Let the reader examine for himself.

But we must attend to *the arguments*, by which Dr. Ware proves, that the passage under consideration refers not to final salvation, but to Christian privileges. His first argument is, "that the Epistle is addressed to the whole Christian community at Ephesus, without any intimation that any expressions in it are applicable to some, and not to others." And where would have been the propriety of intimating that any of the expressions were applicable to some and not to others, when the whole community was made up of those, who had openly renounced their sins, and, in the face of persecution and death, boldly professed their faith in Christ. A Christian community *then* was not what we generally call so *now*. The population of Ephesus, before the introduction of Christianity, were "without God in the world,"—*atheists*. It was among such a people, that Paul gathered a Church, that is, a society of those whom God had "quickened," and "made nigh by the blood of Christ," and "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," whom, in short, he had made entirely different from what they were by nature. The rest of the Ephesians remained as they were, "enemies to God by wicked works." Accordingly, the Christian community among the Ephesians comprised those who were apparently quickened, saved by grace, holy. But what is called a christian community among us, comprises all, both saints and sinners, who live together in any place or country, where the Christian religion has been established. If any man should proceed in his reasoning, on the supposition that a church, or Christian community among the Ephesians was the same, as what we call a Christian community here; he would betray great want of attention to facts,

and would disregard one of the most important helps to a right understanding of the Scriptures ; namely, that we carefully consider the circumstances of those who wrote them, and of those to whom they were written.

But Dr. Ware proceeds in his argument ; “ That this choice or predestination was not that of individuals to eternal life, but of all who received the Christian faith, to the profession and privileges of the gospel—appears still farther from other expressions addressed in the same manner. It is for these same persons, saints, chosen, &c, that the Apostle thought it needful very earnestly to pray to God, ‘ that they might be strengthened with might by his spirit,—that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith ; that they might be rooted and grounded in love ;’ very suitable to be addressed to professed believers as a promiscuous body ; but such as we should hardly expect, if the persons designated, were by the very designation understood to be those only who were certainly chosen to eternal life, and were already grounded in love, &c.”

Nothing can be plainer than that this reasoning of Dr. Ware does not answer his purpose. For every Christian on earth, however advanced he may be in holiness, and however strong his hope of heaven, does offer up just such prayer as that above mentioned, *for himself*. And is it not perfectly suitable that he should ? And if it is suitable that the true Christian should pray thus for himself, it must be suitable that he should pray thus for other true Christians. Although the Christian has repented, and believed, and is holy ; his repentance, faith, and holiness are but begun. He prays that they may be continued and increased, by the constant influence of divine grace. The prayer is perfectly consistent with the attainments of the best man on earth. It

is plain then, that Dr. Ware's attempt to prove, from the nature of the Apostle's prayer, that he did not mean to address the saints at Ephesus as being true Christians, already grounded in love, is entirely unsuccessful ; since no prayer could have been more proper, on supposition of their *being* true Christians.

Dr. Ware allows that the prayer, above referred to, is very suitable to be offered up for "professed believers as a promiscuous body." He doubtless means the whole body of professing believers, including the sincere as well as the hypocritical. Certainly he cannot mean that sincere Christians are to be excepted. But if they are not to be excepted, then the prayer is suitable in relation to them. Prayer cannot be properly offered up for a promiscuous body, unless those, who compose that body, have something in common, on account of which the same prayer is suited to them all. In the case before us, those for whom the prayer was offered, had common wants. Whether they were all sincere Christians or not, they all needed what the apostle supplicated for them. So that the prayer would have been perfectly proper, had they *all* been truly sanctified. And none the less proper surely, on supposition they were "certainly chosen to eternal life." Could such a choice prevent their needing the blessings of the gospel? If because men are chosen to eternal life, they do not need the blessings mentioned in the apostle's prayer; then they do not need conversion, or faith, or any other blessing,—not even that very eternal life, to which they are chosen. What dream of Antinomianism or fatalism was ever so strange as this?

But Dr. Ware says, the apostle "thinks it proper to exhort these same persons to walk worthy of their vocation, to put off the old man, and put on the new man,

and not to grieve the Spirit.”—“Very suitable to be addressed to the *promiscuous body* of *professing Christians*;—very suitable, if by saints, chosen, predestinated, this only were meant; but certainly not so, if by these terms were designated persons chosen from eternity to final salvation, and already saints and faithful in the highest and literal sense. Such, as distinguished from the rest of the world, are not proper subjects of exhortation to walk worthy of the Christian vocation.”

But I ask why they are not proper subjects of such exhortation? Is it not the *duty* of *all* men to walk worthy of the Christian vocation? And can it cease to be the duty of any, because they are already real saints, and are chosen to salvation? God has chosen them, *that they should be holy*. Can this release them from the *obligation* to be holy? The grace of God in choosing men to salvation, and in making them saints, is represented by the apostles, as a new motive to duty, not as a reason for neglecting it. Now if walking worthy of their vocation is the *duty* of those who are chosen to salvation and are already saints; then clearly it is proper that they should be *exhorted* to walk thus. For to what can the Scriptures more properly exhort men, than to do their *duty*.

But we may take another view. If God has determined to bring men to final salvation, he has determined to do it by certain means. These means are repentance, faith, and increasing, persevering holiness. But these are *active duties* of *rational moral agents*. Men must perform them, *as moral agents*. And *as moral agents* they must be *excited* to perform them. But how are moral agents excited to perform duty, but by exhortations, commands, promises, and threats? Now do men cease to be moral agents, because they are “al-

ready saints in the literal sense?" Dr. Ware's reasoning implies that they do. If he would allow that they continue to be moral agents, he must allow it to be proper that they should be *treated* as moral agents, and be exhorted and commanded to do their duty.—He thinks "they cannot be exhorted to be renewed,—because by the supposition their renewal is already certain." But suppose it is certain that they are renewed, that is, that their renewal is begun; is it not necessary that it should be continued and increased? Because they have *begun* to obey, is their increasing, persevering obedience unnecessary? But if persevering obedience is necessary, they must be influenced to it, and must be influenced by motives. I spoke of *active* duties. To put off the old man, and put on the new man, to be strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man, &c. is to love God with increasing ardor, and obey with increasing constancy and delight. What in the creation can be more active than this? But Christians cannot be active without active powers; and they cannot exert their active powers in doing their duty, without motives; and what better motives can be used with them, than the exhortations and warnings of Scripture?

Dr. Ware says, renewal, being certain, "is what they have no power either to prevent, or to bring about." But does it follow, that because it is *certain* a man *has* acted or *will* act in a particular way, he has *no power* to act thus, and no power to act otherwise? Christ's word rendered it very certain, that Peter would deny him, and Judas betray him. But did that certainty take away their power to do what they did, or to refrain from it? Dr. Ware asks, "And with what propriety can such," that is, those who are already saints, and chosen to eternal life, "be exhorted not to grieve the Spirit of

God?" I answer, with the same propriety that they can be exhorted to avoid any sin, or perform any duty. I answer again, that the Apostle makes the very consideration, that those, whom he addresses, *are holy*, and that they are the objects of God's special favour, a motive to *enforce* such exhortations. He tells them they are the temple of the Holy Ghost ; that they are the members of Christ, and are not their own ; and makes use of this as a reason for glorifying God by a pure and holy life. See 1 Cor. vi. 15—20. 2 Cor. vi, 16, 17. So in a multitude of places, the very consideration, that men are Christians indeed, and that God has conferred so great a blessing upon them as to make them heirs of heaven, is urged as a powerful motive to gratitude and obedience. And a powerful motive it must surely be, if our being real Christians, and heirs of an eternal inheritance, is to be regarded as a divine favour.

The farther I proceed, the more am I satisfied of the total mistake of Dr. Ware in supposing that the divine purpose, which makes any future character or action of men *certain*, is inconsistent with their moral agency, or with the proper influence of motives. This supposition, which mixes itself more or less with the reasoning of all who oppose the doctrine of the divine purposes, may be proved, and has been proved, both false and absurd, by arguments which I think no man is able to invalidate.

Reasoning from Rom. ix.

Dr. Ware thinks that a similar method of investigation to that which was applied to the passage in Ephesians, will convince his readers, "that this passage has no relation to an Election to eternal life." The candid reader must decide whether his method of investigation serves his purpose, in respect either to that passage or

this. In relation to Rom. ix, I have scarcely any thing to add to my reasoning in my Letters, which, in its main points, Dr. Ware has not even attempted to confute. Most of what he says about the general scope of the first part of the Epistle is doubtless correct. What then? Does that disprove the doctrine of Election? No more than it disproves any thing else. As to national distinctions, and religious privileges, I have already expressed my views. If Unitarians will consider the real influence of religious privileges, and the momentous consequences of the distinction which God has made respecting them, upon the character and future condition of men; they may find as great difficulty in what Dr. Ware has said respecting Jacob and Esau, p. 76, 77, as in the Orthodox doctrine.

Dr. Ware admits what I advanced in my Letters, that the reflection of the Apostle, on the case of Jacob and Esau, v. 16, implies a general principle of the divine government, but thinks it must be confined to cases similar to that of Jacob and Esau, and that it cannot relate to *final salvation*. But it seems clear to me, that the whole reasoning of the Apostle *makes* it relate to final salvation, and that, without such a relation, his reasoning is weakness itself. For he shows, as Dr. Ware remarks, that those distinctions on which the Jews valued themselves, *were done away*. If the particular distinction he speaks of had been of the same nature with these, he would have said at once, *it is ended*. But he shows that a real distinction is *still made* among men, and justifies God in making it. What was that distinction? Not a national one—not one in regard to religious privileges; for that we are informed, was done away. It must have been a distinction, *then really existing*,—a distinction, with which *the Jews would find fault*, but which *Paul would justify*.

It must have been, a distinction, which would answer the account the Apostle gave of it, a distinction between the children of the flesh and the children of God ; between those who were fitted to destruction, and those prepared unto glory. What distinction was this ? I hope when Dr. Ware shall find time to review his remarks on this subject, he will keep in mind, that the Apostle spoke of a distinction then really existing, a distinction offensive to the Jews, but which he meant to justify. He first brings the distinction into view, v. 6. "They are not all Israel who are of Israel." This distinction between true saints, and those who had merely the name and external privileges of saints, he illustrates and justifies by the distinction once made between Isaac and Ishmael, and between Jacob and Esau ; and then by what God said to Moses, asserting his sovereign right to have mercy on whom he will, in another case ; v. 15, referring to Exod. xxxiii. 19 ; and again by what he said of Pharaoh, affirming that he raised him up for the purposes of his glory, as Dr. Ware sets forth, p. 78.—Now mark well, it is *immediately upon this*, the Apostle affirms, that God exercised the right of *hardening whom he would*, and this *in opposition* to showing them *mercy*. This he represented as a distinction then actually made, and against which he knew the Jews would raise such objections as he mentions, v. 19, though they would be far enough from raising them against that external, national distinction, which they had always gloried in, but which was then done away. This was the very distinction, which the Apostle defends in the following verses, where he speaks of God's making *of the same lump, some vessels to honour, and others to dishonour*, and where, with his eye upon the same subject, he speaks of *vessels of mercy prepared unto glory, and vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*.

And let me say, finally ; it was to this distinction, *then actually existing*,—*then objected to by the pride of Jews*, but *defended by the Apostle*,—it was to *this distinction*, the Apostle applied that general principle of the divine administration which he vindicated, by referring to distinctions of another character, formerly made.

With these remarks, I leave this interesting passage to the consideration of the attentive reader, especially the discerning biblical critic.

As to the difference, which Dr. Ware mentions, between my statement of the doctrine of Reprobation, and the statement generally made by the Orthodox, I have but a word to say. I did not mean to state it in the same terms. But to what does the difference amount? I represented the decree of Reprobation to be, “the determination of God to punish the disobedient *for their sins*, and *according to their deserts*.” The Assembly of Divines say, in regard to the non-elect, “God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, &c. to pass by them, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath *for their sin*, to the praise of his glorious justice.” If it is to the praise of his *justice*, it must be, as I stated, not only *for their sin*, but *according to it*. Now, in reality, what difference is there between God’s determining to punish the finally disobedient for their sins, and his passing by the same persons, and ordaining them to dishonour and wrath for their sins?

The last paragraph of Letter iv, displays a frankness and kindness of heart, which I love to acknowledge and to honour in my opponent, and which I will ever strive to copy ; though in this case, their exercise is attended with misapprehension. Dr. Ware seems to suppose that I shrink from the doctrine of Reprobation, because I find it cannot be defended consistently with the moral

character of God, or that I think it desirable to keep out of view the most offensive feature of Calvinism. But this is not exactly the case. I do indeed think the doctrine has often been stated injudiciously and harshly, and that it is very liable to be *understood* in a manner, which really makes it inconsistent with the character of God. And this is the reason why I deem it necessary to state it with peculiar caution. A subject may be put into such a posture in the minds of those whom we address, that whatever we say concerning it, will be in danger of being perverted, or misapplied. When we are apprised that this is the case, we ought certainly to be very guarded in our language, and to take special care to bring into view those parts of the subject, which are apt to be overlooked. This is what I have attempted to do. My object is not to *conceal* the truth, but to make an exhibition of it, which shall be just and scriptural, and which, at the same time, shall, if possible, be so well guarded, that men can find nothing in it to oppose, except the *truth itself*.

I am happy that Dr. Ware exhibits none of the violence, bitterness, or scurrility, with which many oppose this doctrine ; though he is not wanting in zeal. But when I soberly consider the real nature of the doctrine against which he and others make such strenuous opposition, I hardly know what to say. It would seem as though creatures of yesterday, as we are, instead of wishing to limit the extent of Jehovah's dominion, would rejoice in the highest degree of sovereignty which he can exercise. 'Tis true, there are reasons enough against our committing our eternal or even our temporal interests absolutely to the will of man. But is not the infinite perfection of God sufficient to secure our implicit and unlimited confidence in his administration? And if

he tells us in his word, that *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy* ; that is, exercises a sovereign control over our character and destiny ; why should we not say, Amen, fully persuaded that a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness will, in all respects, do right ? Why should we not cheerfully say, the Lord reigneth, and doeth all things after the counsel of his own will ? since the more extensive his dominion, the safer are the interests of the universe.

CHAPTER X.

ATONEMENT.

All that I can do on this subject is to give a statement of Dr. Ware's scheme, and make a few general remarks upon it.

Doctrine of redemption, as held by Dr. Ware.

“ Christ was our Redeemer by those miracles, which proved him to be a messenger and teacher from God ; by those instructions and that example, which were to remove our ignorance, and deliver us from the slavery of sin ; by those high motives to repentance and holiness, which are found in the revelation of a future life and righteous retribution, and the persuasive efficacy given to his example by his sufferings, &c.” p. 92. “ Christ's sufferings are the means of delivering us from punishment, only as they are instrumental in delivering us from the dominion of sin. They are the grounds of our forgiveness, only as they are the means of bringing us to repen-

tance, only as they operate to bring us to that state of holiness, which has the promise of forgiveness, and qualifies us for it, p. 93.—“Christ’s being made a curse for us redeemed us from the curse of the law, by its influence in bringing us back to repentance.” p. 97.

The same views are expressed in a sermon of Dr. Ware, and still more largely in Dr. John Taylor’s treatise on the atonement.

Although this notion of atonement, redemption, &c. is affirmed with as much confidence as it could be, if it were supported by the strongest evidence, and were perfectly free from difficulty ; I must be allowed to pause a while before receiving it, and to state briefly some of the objections which seem to lie against it.

First, Dr. Ware’s scheme *assumes, that there is nothing to hinder the forgiveness of sinners, but their continuance in sin* ; that it is an established principle of God’s moral government, that *repentance* shall put an end to the consequences of sin.

Now I ask, in the first place, whether *the divine law supports* such a principle. The law promises a reward for obedience, and threatens a penalty for disobedience. But where does it give us the least hint, that repentance will set aside the penalty?—Should we expect this, from considering *the nature of the case*? Suppose transgressors repent. Does that alter the guilt of their past transgression? Does God therefore cease to look upon past transgression with displeasure? “We may as well affirm,” says a learned Divine, “that our former obedience atones for our present sins, as that our present obedience makes amends for antecedent transgressions.” But if the guilt of past transgression remains the same as before, and God looks upon it with the same displeasure ; how will he do justice to his own character, or to the principles of his

moral government, if in his conduct he *shows* no displeasure? How is it with a civil government? Does it hold out to criminals the prospect of pardon, in case they repent? What would be the consequence, if it should? But the consequence of such a principle in the divine government would be as much more dreadful, as the interests of the divine government are more important, and require to be more watchfully guarded, than those of any human government.

We may learn something on this subject from the analogy of God's government in the present world. "In the common occurrences of life, the man who, by the practice of vice, has injured his character, his fortune, and his health, does not find himself instantly restored to the full enjoyment of these blessings on repenting of his past misconduct. Now if the attributes of the Deity demand, that the punishment should not outlive the crime, on what ground shall we justify this temporal dispensation? The difference in *degree*, cannot affect the question in the least. It matters not, whether the punishment be of long or short duration; whether in this world or in the next. If the justice or the goodness of God, require that punishment should not be inflicted, when repentance has taken place; it must be a violation of those attributes to permit any punishment whatever, the most slight, or the most transient. Nor will it avail to say, that the evils of *this life* attendant upon vice, are the effects of an established constitution, and follow in the way of natural consequence. Is not that established constitution itself the effect of the divine decree? And are not its several operations as much the appointment of its Almighty framer, as if they had individually flowed from his immediate direction? But besides, what reason have we to suppose that God's treatment of us in a fu-

ture state, will not be of the same nature as we find it in this; according to established rules, and in the way of natural consequence?"* Is it then consistent with reason and propriety to assume, without proof, that nothing could ever hinder the forgiveness of sin, but impenitence? Were there no appearances *directly against* this assumption, I should think it altogether unsafe to adopt it, without positive evidence in its favour. For even if *civil* government could always grant forgiveness to offenders on their repentance; and if under the divine administration in the present life repentance should be found to put an immediate end to the visible consequences of particular sins; how could we certainly conclude that the Governor of the world will not judge it best to guard the *everlasting* interests of his kingdom by higher sanctions? How could we certainly conclude, that rebels would find no other obstacles, besides their impenitence, in the way of final impunity? I should certainly charge myself with inexcusable temerity, if, without the best evidence, I should venture to decide on a subject so vast and incomprehensible. And further; if we would be secure against a wrong judgment in this case, we must not forget, that we ourselves are transgressors, and as such, are extremely liable to be blinded by self-interest, and to adopt any opinion favourable to our wishes, though ever so destitute of evidence.

I have not intended by any thing which has now been advanced, to admit, that repentance could ever have actually taken place under the moral government of God, if no atonement had been made. Indeed there is no more reason to think that any instance of repentance would have been found among apostate men, than

* Magee.

among the apostate angels, had not salvation been provided through an atonement. The supposition of repentance, without regard to an atonement, has been intended merely to assist in the investigation of principles.

Second objection. Dr. Ware's scheme assumes, that the words *redemption*, *sacrifice*, &c. have the same signification when applied to the work of Christ, as they have in the few passages he has selected, where they relate to other subjects, and are obviously used in a very different sense. Dr. Ware finds a few places, where *redemption* denotes mere deliverance from temporal judgments, without any price being paid. And these examples of the use of the term, he says, "may lead us to some just notions of its meaning, when it is said, we have redemption by the blood of Christ."—"He redeemed us by his blood, as the children of Israel were redeemed by the mighty power of God." See pp. 90, 91, 92. Now is it consistent with sound principles of interpretation, to take it for granted, that because the word *redeem* is sometimes used in this secondary and imperfect sense, in relation to the deliverance of men from temporal evils, it is used in the same sense in regard to the eternal salvation of sinners? Is this to be taken for granted, when the Bible itself makes a most obvious and important difference, representing the deliverance of men from temporal bondage to be effected by the mere exercise of God's power, but representing expressly, and in various forms, that redemption from eternal destruction by divine power is *through the blood of Christ, through the death of a Mediator*, and ascribing the whole of salvation to this, as the great means of procuring it? How can we reason from one case to the other, when the Scripture represents them as so widely different?

I have the same general remarks as to *sacrifice*. I admit the word is sometimes used in a very imperfect sense, denoting a mere offering to God of prayer, praise, or obedience, or a mere act of kindness. But upon what principle can Dr. Ware draw from this unusual and imperfect sense of the word, the broad conclusion, that it is in a similar sense, "that sacrifice is applied to whatever was done by Jesus Christ for our benefit?" Because such is the meaning *sometimes*, does it follow that it is so *here*? This, then, I state as a serious objection against the scheme of my opponent; that it overlooks entirely the proper method of determining the meaning of the words *redemption*, *sacrifice*, &c, as they are applied to the work of Christ, and rests on the assumption, that their meaning here is similar to what it is, not generally in the Scriptures, but in a few texts, where the words have a very unusual and imperfect sense.

My *third* objection to the scheme is, that *it denies the obvious sense of many passages of Scripture which relate to the subject, and gives them a meaning, in a high degree unnatural and forced*. Without supposing that Unitarians have a preconceived opinion which they wish to support, it is impossible for me to account for it, that they should interpret the word of God as they do. The passages which assert a real atonement are too many to be repeated here. The Scriptures declare that Christ is "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; that he hath given himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God; that he is the propitiation for our sins; that he died for us; that he redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us; that we are forgiven through his blood, &c." If such declarations as these do not teach the doctrine of the atonement, as it is commonly held, nothing can. These texts assert it in lan-

guage as plain, express, and emphatic, as any which can be imagined. To say, they do not teach the doctrine, seems to me about the same as saying, the inspired writers could not teach it, if they would. But this scheme not only denies the plain meaning of Scripture, but gives it a meaning exceedingly unnatural and forced. When the Scripture declares that we have "redemption through Christ's blood, even the forgiveness of sins;" Unitarians make it mean, that his blood promotes our *repentance*. When the Scripture declares that Christ died for us, and is the propitiation for our sins; Unitarians make it mean merely that his sufferings confirmed his doctrines, and are instrumental in delivering us from the dominion of sin. When the Scripture declares, that Christ became a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the law; Unitarians will have it, that this is only asserting its influence to bring us back to repentance. Now let men of sober sense collect the passages of Scripture which relate to the work of redemption by Christ, and set them down on one side; and the passages from Dr. Ware's Letters, which exhibit the Unitarian doctrine, and set them down on the other side; and then compare them, and see if they are of like signification. Let men of patient research and critical acumen do this, and see if there is any likeness between them.

My *fourth objection* is, that this scheme *takes away the difference which the Scripture uniformly makes between the sufferings of Christ, and of his apostles*. If the sufferings and death of Christ are really nothing more than Dr. Ware makes them; they are in no sense distinguishable from the sufferings and death of Paul. Who can say, that Paul did not give as much and as valuable instruction, as Jesus did? or that he did not as really con-

firm his doctrines by his miracles, his sufferings and death? Dr. Ware says, "Christ was our redeemer by those miracles which proved him to be a messenger and teacher from God; by those instructions and that example which were to remove our ignorance, and deliver us from the slavery of sin; by those high motives to repentance and holiness, which are found in the revelation of a future life and righteous retribution; and especially by the confirmation his doctrines and promises received, and the persuasive efficacy given to his example by his sufferings, his voluntary death, and his resurrection." Now in all these ways, except resurrection, Paul was as really a redeemer, as Jesus Christ. Why then is it not proper to speak of the redemption that is in PAUL, to celebrate the efficacy of his death, and to ascribe to it the forgiveness of sin? There is in fact, according to the statement of Dr. Ware's opinion just quoted, not a single point of dissimilitude between the work of Christ as redeemer, and the work of Paul, excepting the resurrection. And if Dr. Ware's opinion is true, I am unable to see why it would not be as proper to say of Paul, as of Christ; "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;—he is the propitiation for our sins;—we have redemption through his blood." But the Bible does not speak thus of Paul. And why does it not? Can any answer be found, but in the peculiarities of the Orthodox doctrine?

This general argument acquires great weight, when we attend particularly to the manner in which the Scripture speaks of Christ, compared with the manner in which it speaks of prophets and apostles. Here we have a test of truth—a test of special importance, and less liable to be misapplied, than perhaps any other. Suppose I doubt as to the meaning of those passages,

which assert in direct terms, that Christ offered himself a sacrifice for sin ; that he died for us, redeemed us by his blood, &c. I go then to other passages of the inspired writers, particularly those, in which they freely express their feelings with respect to Christ, their gratitude for his kindness, their estimation of the work he performed, their reliance on his death, and their ascriptions of glory to him as a Redeemer. From such passages I learn what were the habitual feelings of the writers. I then ask, whether this expression of feeling on the part of prophets and apostles agrees best with the views of the Orthodox, or of Unitarians, respecting the *other* passages? Does it agree best with the notion, that the influence of Christ's death was like the influence of Paul's death? or with the Orthodox doctrine, that Christ's death was vicarious, and had an influence essentially different from that of any other?

My *fifth* objection, and the last I shall now state, arises from a *comparative view of the moral influence produced by the two systems*. Dr. Ware ascribes a certain influence to the death of Christ. But the death of Christ as we understand it, *has that same influence, and has it in a still higher degree*, than according to his scheme ; and besides this, answers *other important ends*, to which, according to his scheme, it has no relation. Dr. Ware says, Christ's sufferings "are instrumental in delivering us from the dominion of sin ;"—"they are the means of bringing us to repentance ;"—"they operate to bring us to that state of holiness, which has the promise of forgiveness, and qualifies us for it." My position is, first, that Christ's sufferings and death, as the Orthodox regard them, have the *same influence*. According to the scheme of Unitarians, Christ's sufferings and death *confirm his doctrines and promises, and give a persuasive efficacy to his*

example. They do the same according to our views. And Orthodox writers have described this influence abundantly, and with great force.

But my position goes farther. The sufferings of Christ, according to our scheme, have the same moral influence *in a far higher degree.* I mean, that the sufferings of Christ, as apprehended by the Orthodox, have a much more powerful influence to lead sinners to repentance, than as they are apprehended by Unitarians. What are the motives, which lead sinners to repentance? Certainly one of these is, *the evil of sin, and the abhorrence with which God regards it.* But these are made to appear much greater according to our scheme of the atonement, than according to the other. The sufferings of Christ, as we view them, are *a direct and unequalled display* of the evil of sin, and the abhorrence with which God regards it. They are intended primarily for this very purpose. And we believe they really answer this purpose in as high a degree as would have been answered, by God's inflicting upon sinners the whole penalty of the law. But as viewed by Unitarians, they are intended for no such purpose, and answer no such purpose. Now surely that scheme of the atonement which gives the highest view of the evil of sin, and the displeasure of God against it, must have the most powerful tendency to lead men to repentance. This is too plain to need any illustration. I might say the same in regard to the penalty of the law, or the *punishment* which sin deserves, as set forth by the death of Christ. To those who receive the Orthodox doctrine, the death of Christ shows the dreadfulness of that punishment, in the most striking light possible. But to Unitarians it does not show it at all. Again; to those who receive the Orthodox doctrine, the death of Christ

exhibits a far higher degree of divine love and mercy, than to Unitarians. These acknowledge indeed, that the death of Christ showed divine love by giving confirmation to his doctrines, authority to his precepts, and a persuasive influence to his example. But according to our views of the subject, the divine love was much more gloriously displayed. For there was, as we apprehend, a mighty obstacle in the way of forgiveness, which no penitence, obedience, or suffering of sinners could ever remove. But God, "for the great love wherewith he loved us," removed that obstacle by providing a vicarious sacrifice, or by sending his son to die for us. At such a vast expense, the love of God purchased our forgiveness. This divine love, so often celebrated in the Scriptures, is a grand motive to repentance. While it shows sinners their inexcusable wickedness, it forbids their despair, encourages their hopes and their efforts, melts their hearts with pious grief, and attracts them to obedience. In such ways as these, which I can only hint at, it becomes perfectly obvious, that our doctrine invests the sufferings of Christ with a power to lead sinners to repentance, greatly superior to any which can be derived from the doctrine of Unitarians. Thus the death of Christ, according to our doctrine, has the *same kind of moral influence*, which it has according to Dr. Ware's scheme, and has it in a far *superior degree*; besides all the other and higher ends which it answers, in relation to the perfections and government of God, and the interests of his universal empire. This then is my objection, that even in regard to that influence, which Dr. Ware considers as the only thing of any consequence in Christ's Death, his scheme is much inferior to the Orthodox. It takes away half the power of the cross to bring men to repentance.

After this general view, I shall think it wholly unnecessary to remark on all the particular passages in Dr. Ware's fifth Letter, which seem to me erroneous. I shall merely glance at a few of the principal.

I have been not a little surprised at Dr. Ware's saying, that I have not explained the figurative language, commonly used respecting the work of Christ. But I have been most of all surprised, that he should charge me with mixing the literal with the metaphorical sense, especially in the following case. He says, "When by a price paid by some friend, a captive is restored to liberty, or the punishment of a criminal is remitted; there is redemption in the original and literal sense of the word. In the same manner, if Christ delivers us from punishment by suffering an evil, which was equivalent, so far as the ends of the divine government are concerned, to the execution of the curse of the law upon transgressors; *that is a literal redemption*, and that, and the other correspondent terms, such as *bought* and *ransomed*, are applied in the *literal sense*," p. 89. But can this be correct? The restoration of a captive by the payment of a *pecuniary price*, is indeed redemption in the *literal* sense. But the procuring of a sinner's *spiritual* deliverance and restoration by an expedient of a *moral* nature is redemption in a *metaphorical* sense. To make the sense of the word *metaphorical*, it is not necessary surely, that the *spiritual* restoration should be procured *without any means whatever*, nor without means which are equivalent, in a moral view, to the execution of the penalty of the law. Nor is it necessary that the means used should have a less intimate connexion with the *spiritual* deliverance procured, than the payment of money has with the deliverance of a captive from *temporal* bondage. It is sufficient to make a perfect metaphor, if

a transaction of a *moral* nature is represented under the similitude of a *pecuniary* or *civil* transaction. Christ *redeemed* sinners, by paying a price equivalent, in a moral view, to their punishment. Here is no mixture of a literal with a metaphorical sense. The redemption spoken of is of a *moral* nature ; and the *price* paid is of a *moral* nature ; and so the words *redemption*, *price*, *pay*, are all used in a metaphorical sense. I said in my Letters ; “as the debtor is freed from imprisonment by the friend who steps forward and pays his debt ; so are sinners freed from punishment by the Saviour, who shed his blood for them.” On this Dr. Ware says, “the payment is as *literal* in the one case as in the other.” But how so ? The deliverance of sinners from punishment by the death of Christ is represented under the similitude of a debtor’s deliverance from prison by the payment of his debt. It is this representation of the *moral* transaction in language derived from a common transaction in civil life, which constitutes the metaphor. Just so the representation of God’s pouring out his Spirit, or raining down righteousness, is a metaphor taken from the pouring out of rain upon the earth. The metaphor in both cases is perfect.—If in the case above referred to, Dr. Ware had said, the payment in one case is *an important reality*, as well as in the other, he would have said the exact truth. All the doctrines of religion are often expressed in metaphorical language. And this language is so far from rendering their meaning obscure and doubtful, that it gives them, and is designed to give them, greater clearness and force.

My respected opponent expresses a serious objection to our using the metaphorical language which the Scriptures use, and other similar language, on the subject of redemption, because it has been the occasion of mistake.

But I think, on further consideration, he must be satisfied that his objection is not valid, and that, with our best efforts, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, on such a subject, to avoid the use of metaphors. And if we should succeed in our efforts to do this, it would certainly have a most unhappy effect. The fact is, that in most cases, if we confine ourselves to language which is wholly free from a figurative sense, we cannot convey the truth, so as either to correspond with our own feelings, or to make a just impression on the minds of others. The importance and necessity of metaphorical language on moral and religious subjects, result from the very constitution of our nature. And Unitarians have no more right to expect that we shall lay aside the use of metaphors on the subject of redemption, than on other subjects in religion. It is admitted, that some men will misunderstand the metaphorical language now under consideration. They will also misunderstand the metaphors by which other divine truths are illustrated. Even the texts which represent God as having hands and eyes, have by some men been understood literally, and are often understood so now, especially by children. But shall we on this account cease to speak of the hand of God, to denote his active power, or the eyes of God to denote his knowledge? And shall we cease to pray, "forgive us our debts," because our sins are not debts *literally*? Or when we use such metaphors in religious discourse, or in prayer, must we always stop to explain them?

Dr. Ware, p. 85, speaks of our "charging Unitarians with denying or explaining away the doctrine of atonement, for the very reason that they explain the language in question as figurative." But he has quite mistaken our meaning. We do not charge Unitarians with error,

because they explain the language *as figurative*, but because they do not give to the *figurative* language its *true* and *obvious sense*. Just so we should do in other like cases. When the Scriptures assert that “the eyes of God are in every place,” we say the language implies that God is *omniscient*. But if, because it is a metaphor, any one should deny that it denotes a knowledge or discernment in God, answering to natural vision in us ; we should charge him with denying an important truth, not because he considered the language *metaphorical*, but because he denied the *obvious meaning* of the figure. In explaining those texts which speak of our being *bought with a price*, we assert that they denote something in the work of redemption by Christ, which really answers to the price which is paid for the deliverance of a slave or captive ; and we become very confident in our explanation, when we find that the Bible, in various ways, describes to us *the very thing* which is called the *price*, that is, *the death of Christ*, and that many texts both of a figurative and literal sense, represent that death as of the utmost importance in the work of redemption, and as the means of forgiveness and salvation to sinners. The texts above referred to, must denote something which fairly answers to the price paid for the deliverance of a captive, and which may justly be represented by it ; that is, the death of Christ must be *the consideration* in the moral government of God, *on account* of which sinners are saved ; as in the other case, the price paid is the consideration, on account of which a captive is delivered, not merely a means of preparing him to receive deliverance,—though such preparation must be included, as a necessary circumstance.

In my Letters I signified, what I very honestly apprehended to be true, that the denial of the doctrine

of atonement is "contrary to the humble spirit of Christian faith." Dr. Ware, p. 102, seems to think it would follow from this, that "it is unsafe to allow ourselves to inquire about the doctrine." But how would this follow? He would doubtless unite with us in saying, that the denial of *the divine existence* is contrary to the humble spirit of Christian faith, and clearly shows the want of moral virtue. But would this imply, that it is unsafe to inquire into the subject of the divine existence? We should certainly deem it proper in such a case, to persuade men to inquire with the greatest diligence; though we should set it down as conclusive evidence against them, if they were not convinced. So we consider it contrary to the humble spirit of Christian faith to deny the authority of the Scriptures. But is it therefore unsafe to inquire into the subject? Free inquiry, properly conducted, is important as well as safe, on all subjects; because it is the only effectual means of discovering the truth. But when, after all, the truth fails of being discovered; it becomes a serious question, whether the failure is owing to the want of evidence, or to something wrong in the state of the mind.

In pp. 103, 104, Dr. Ware has expressed an opinion which I cannot pass over unnoticed, though it is the same, substantially, with a principle which I controverted in my Letters. He says, that the Scriptures, "without any reference to any kind of atonement, refer the forgiveness of sin solely to the mercy of God, by which he is ready to accept reformation and a return to virtue." His meaning undoubtedly is, the Scriptures do this in many instances. And so the reasoning is briefly this. The Scriptures, in many places, speak of God as merciful, and ready to forgive the penitent, *without ex-*

pressly referring to any atonement ; therefore forgiveness rests solely on the mercy of God and the repentance of sinners, and the atonement has nothing to do with it, except as it may be conducive to repentance. But what would Dr. Ware say, if I should reason in the same manner? Thus. The Scriptures in some places speak of the death of Christ as the cause or means of our forgiveness, without any mention of repentance or holiness in us ; therefore the death of Christ is the sole cause or means of our forgiveness, and neither our repentance, nor the mercy of God has any thing to do with it. Or thus. In some passages the Scriptures attribute our forgiveness and salvation to faith, without mentioning either the mercy of God, or the blood of Christ ; therefore faith is the only cause or foundation of our forgiveness, and neither the mercy of God, nor the blood of Christ has any thing to do with it. To just such conclusions shall we be led, if we attempt to learn the whole truth on the subjects of religion, from any particular passages, while we disregard other passages containing additional information on the same subjects.

There are indeed many texts, which declare God's readiness to forgive those who repent. But we find too that a propitiation for sin was appointed from the beginning, and that the appointed propitiation, which was set forth in the Mosaic law by various sacrifices, had the same influence respecting human salvation before the coming of Christ, as after. What that influence was, we learn most clearly from the New Testament. When all parts of Scripture are taken together, it becomes perfectly clear, that every declaration of God's readiness to forgive the penitent, *presupposes* the propitiation or atonement, made by the death of Christ. Now it is certainly a violation of every just princi-

ple of reasoning, to separate the declaration of God's readiness to forgive from the consideration of that atonement, which he appointed from the beginning as the medium of forgiveness. Whether the two things are always mentioned in the same passage or not, they are mentioned, and connected together in the holy Scriptures. These Scriptures we receive entire; and we learn from them, *first*, that the infinite love of God was the original fountain of salvation; *secondly*, that the sacrifice of Christ was the grand expedient adopted by the Governor of the world, to render human salvation, which would otherwise have been wholly inadmissible, consistent with law and justice; and *thirdly*, that the repentance of sinners is indispensably necessary to their enjoying the salvation thus graciously provided. So that when we assert that the blood of Christ is, in one respect, the sole ground of forgiveness, we do not, as Dr. Ware supposes, forget those texts which attribute forgiveness to the free and boundless love of God, nor those which represent repentance as an indispensable condition of forgiveness.

From p. 106, 107, it seems that Dr. Ware has misapprehended my meaning as to the entire worthlessness of all the good works and dispositions of men. What I said related simply to *justification*. But because good works and good dispositions are worthless in regard to *this single point*, we do not consider them worthless in other respects. Although we believe, what Paul abundantly teaches in his Epistles, that our good works must never be named in the presence of God, as the meritorious cause of our justification; I am confident we consider them of as high value, and enforce them by as many and as powerful motives, as any of our opponents;—and with perfect consistency too. For it can never be

shown, that, because our personal holiness is of no account *as a ground of our justification*, it is therefore of no estimation in the sight of God, and not worth our pursuit. Does our denying the value of a thing in *one* particular respect, certainly prove that we deny its value in all other respects? We not only reject with abhorrence the licentious consequence, mentioned by Dr. Ware at the close of his fifth Letter, but we assert that it does not by any means follow from the doctrine we maintain; nay, we think ourselves able to show, that our doctrine guards against it far more effectually, than any other.

CHAPTER XI.

ON DIVINE INFLUENCE.

MOST of what Dr. Ware has said, Letter VI, in regard to the use of means and motives, is perfectly agreeable to the faith of the Orthodox. And let me here inquire, what reason he has to suppose, that the special, the efficacious, or even the supernatural influence of the Spirit, which we believe to be concerned in regeneration, has any less connexion with means and motives, than that divine influence which he asserts. We make the peculiar character which we attribute to the divine influence, to consist, not at all in its setting aside the use of means and rational motives, but *in its giving them their proper effect, or producing its own proper effect by them*. And one would think, that a divine influence, which renders means

and motives *effectual* to bring men to repentance, must at least be more highly valued, than any influence which falls short of this. It seems to me to be indeed very strange, that any man should not see at once, that the influence of God's spirit must be desirable and excellent, *in proportion to its efficacy*, or in proportion to the certainty, with which it produces its effect.

Dr. Ware very justly and fairly represents our different views respecting divine influence, as intimately connected with our views respecting the natural state of man, p. 122, and elsewhere. Now if our views of man's depravity are admitted to be correct, our opponents must, I think, be satisfied, that just such a divine influence as we assert, is necessary to his renovation, and that no influence short of this would answer the purpose. They now think a less powerful influence sufficient, because they think man less depraved. Should they ever be convinced, that man has that degree of moral corruption which we attribute to him, they would at the same time be convinced, that he cannot be brought to a holy life, without a divine influence sufficient to overcome a strong and total opposition to holiness, and to effect a new moral creation.

In a variety of passages, Dr. Ware asserts that our notion of divine influence is inconsistent with human liberty and activity,—inconsistent with the moral character of God—with those texts which complain of the sins of men,—with the commands of the gospel to repent and believe, and with the sincerity of all the exhortations and encouragements given to men. But of this inconsistency, in any of the instances mentioned, what evidence has he produced? And what evidence can he produce? As to its inconsistency with human liberty and activity; I refer to the views I have already advanced. Our

doctrine is, that the divine influence *effectually directs* and *regulates* the liberty and activity of those who are saved ; that it induces them to use their voluntary and moral powers in a right manner. Now is it *setting aside* their liberty or activity, for the Spirit of God to *direct* it, and *regulate* its operations, or induce them properly to use it ? Dr. Ware says, that “ in those, upon whom this influence is exerted, its effects take place without any agency or cooperation of theirs, for they are wholly passive.” But although something like this seems, in not a few instances, to have been maintained by Orthodox men ; I can by no means assent to it. The subjects operated upon by the divine Spirit, are *active, moral beings* ; and the effects produced in them are, primarily, *right moral affections*, and secondarily, correspondent *external actions*. How can *these* “ effects take place, without any agency of theirs ;” when the effects are in fact *their agency itself*, properly directed ?

And how can it be supposed to be inconsistent with the moral character of God, for him to exert an influence upon sinners, which will certainly secure their repentance and salvation ? Should we not rather think, that a Being of infinite goodness would choose to exert an influence, so important to the highest interests of men ? Indeed, if there is any considerable difficulty in the case, it is the fact, that so desirable an influence is not actually imparted to all. But as to this, I hardly need to remark, that no blessing which God bestows, is ever thought to lose its value, because it is not granted to all. Nor, on the other hand, is there any room for those who are left destitute, to find fault, unless they can present a just claim to the blessings withheld. So far at least this subject is very plain.

Again. Is our doctrine “ inconsistent with those

texts, which complain of the sins of men?" The reason which Dr. Ware assigns to prove such an inconsistency is, that, if our doctrine is true, "men act according to the nature given them, and could not act otherwise, without an influence which is not given them." The first part of the reason which is here assigned, and which has a pretty obscure relation to the subject, is, that on the supposition that our doctrine is true, "men act according to the nature given them."—And how do they act, on supposition the Unitarian doctrine is true? Is there any other way in which any accountable being in the Universe can act, but according to his nature, whether that nature be good or bad?—The other part of the reason is, that "men could not act otherwise, without an influence which is not given them." They "*could not* act otherwise." But are men destitute of any power which is necessary to moral agency, because they are not made holy? If they are not, then this reason has no force. If they are, then none, who are not holy, have the power which is necessary to moral agency: which is the same as to say, no *sinner*s can be *moral agents*. And this is the same as saying, that *no moral agents* can be *sinner*s; and if so, there can be no sin in the universe.

It is said, that our doctrine is inconsistent with the commands of the gospel to repent, believe, &c. But how does this appear? Why, because "they have no power to do this, till almighty power is exerted to make them willing." But surely we are not to consider men as wanting the power that is necessary to moral agency, because God does not actually bring them to repent and believe. Though they are sinners, and dependent on the spirit of God for sanctification, they are *moral agents*. Their being *sinner*s necessarily implies moral agency. And if they are moral agents, it is most clearly their

duty to repent, believe, and obey. And is it not proper that the gospel should command them to do their duty?

Finally ; Dr. Ware signifies that our doctrine is inconsistent with the sincerity of the exhortations and encouragements of the gospel to exertion, since it supposes men incapable of willing to perform their duty ; that it is not of themselves to will any thing good, &c. But our doctrine makes men no otherwise incapable of willing to perform their duty, than as they are *indisposed* or *disinclined* to perform it. And must the exhortations to duty contained in the gospel, and the promises to those who perform it, be considered insincere, because men are *not inclined* to perform it ? If so, there is but little sincerity in the Bible.

Dr. Ware's last Letter is a reply to mine, on the moral influence of Orthodoxy compared with the influence of Unitarianism. To many of the remarks contained in this Letter, I cordially subscribe ; but not to all.

"Love to Christ," Dr. Ware says, "will depend on our view of the nature and value of the benefits we receive through him, and not at all on the rank he holds in the scale of being." p. 127. This is saying, that our love to Christ will be the same, both in kind and degree, whether he be possessed of mere *human* perfection, or of *divine* perfection. And this is saying, that *human* perfection is entitled to as high a regard, as *divine*. And this is the same as to say, a perfect *man* may properly be the object of as high an affection, as *God*. And if this is true, it is of no practical consequence, whether we consider the Supreme Being as any thing more than a holy angel, or a holy man ; as our "*love to him will not*

depend at all on the rank he holds in the scale of being." Of course, all the labour of the inspired writers to invest his character with divine glory is of no value, as it can have no effect upon our feelings. Indeed, if Dr. Ware's remark is true, it is no more proper to require us to love *God* with all the heart and soul and mind and strength, than to require us to love a perfectly holy *man* in this manner; and the distinctions constantly made between Jehovah and all inferior ranks of beings are of no importance. For, whether he holds a higher or lower rank, our love, our confidence, our veneration, our worship will all be the same. On this principle, the practice of the Romish church in rendering divine worship to the mother of Jesus, and other saints, is not so faulty as Protestants have supposed. For those departed saints, being perfectly holy, may justly be regarded as objects of the highest religious affection, inasmuch as the propriety of this affection "depends not at all on the rank they hold in the scale of being." Such is the favourite position of Dr. Ware, and others;—a position hastily adopted by them, I am sure,—and confounding things which differ as much, as any one thing can, by the whole length and breadth of infinity, differ from another. What effect must it have upon us, to be told in earnest, that it is a matter of no practical consequence, whether our Saviour is the creator of the heavens and the earth, or a mere creature,—God over all, or a mere child of Adam; that, whether he is the one or the other, our love to him is to be the same,—our confidence and our worship the same? Certainly Unitarians have made the assertion, above quoted, rashly; and if they consider well what it implies, they will not be fond of repeating it.

But I have a word more on this point. If Unitarians do indeed think that "love to Christ depends not

at all on the rank he holds in the scale of being ;” why do they charge us with giving him too high a place in our affections ? Why do they charge us, as they often do, with idolatry ? According to Dr. Ware’s position, Christ deserves as high an affection, as if he were exalted to the rank of *divinity*. To say he does not, is to say, the degree of our affection must depend on his rank in the scale of being. Indeed, Dr. Ware himself *makes* it depend on this. He tells us, that Unitarians cannot give Christ the “*supremacy of affection*, which is due to God only ;” and that they cannot do this, because they ascribe to Christ, “only derived excellences, and a subordinate agency.” And this is the same as if he had said, they cannot give him their supreme affection, because he holds the rank of a mere creature ; thus making our love to him depend, directly and essentially, on the rank he holds in the scale of being. They justify themselves in not giving him their supreme affection, by alleging that he has only the rank of a derived, dependent being. And they are indeed justified, if that is his rank. On the other hand, our *supreme* affection is due to him, if he possesses *supreme excellence*. So that nothing can be more contrary to reason and to fact, than the position that “our love to Christ, depends not at all on the rank he holds in the scale of being.” The question between us and Unitarians respecting the character of Christ, is, in effect, a question respecting the degree of love and veneration which is due to him. And every effort of Unitarians to disprove the proper Deity of Christ, is, in plain truth, an effort to convince us, that we have exercised towards him too high a degree of veneration and love. But for ourselves, we are satisfied that in this respect, our great danger is that of falling below the affection, which his glorious attributes demand, and which the precepts and examples of the Apostles inculcate.

Dr. Ware asks upon what ground I can speak “of a future reward to be obtained by virtuous efforts,” since I have said that no works of ours must be named in the presence of God, and that we must rely on the blood of Christ, as the sole ground of forgiveness. But can there be any difficulty here? May not an undeserved favour, a *mere gift*, which has been procured for us by the kindness of another, be proposed to us, on conditions which we are to fulfil? The rewards of heaven are the rewards of *grace*—procured wholly by the merit of Christ. But may not our diligent exertion be the means of obtaining them? Suppose a man has servants, who owe him a just debt to a large amount, but, through their own fault, are rendered unable ever to make any payment. And suppose he is moved by compassion to forgive the debt, and besides this, to provide a charity fund to be disposed of for their benefit. May he not encourage good conduct in them, by making it still depend upon their own exertions, whether they shall receive the gratuity offered them? May not the gratuity be held up as a reward of their good conduct? And if they obtain the reward, must not their hearts be constantly turned towards the generosity of their disinterested benefactor? Deep in debt as they are, and depending on the mere kindness of another, will they ever name their exertions, as giving them any claim to their reward, or as making it, in any proper sense, a purchase?

At the bottom of p. 130, Dr. Ware says, that a *moral* inability is in fact, to all practical purposes, the same as a *natural* inability.” A *moral* inability is an inability which results from moral causes. Thus a man’s strong disinclination to do any particular duty constitutes a moral inability. But is this strong *disinclination* the same, as an inability consisting in the want of physical power?

As to "practical purposes," these two kinds of inability are extremely and totally different. The one *constitutes* blame-worthiness; the other *frees* from it. We are criminal in proportion to the one, and exculpated in proportion to the other.

On the reasoning of Dr. Ware, pp. 131, 132, I have several remarks to offer. The reasoning relates to the moral influence of punishment in preventing sin, and in reclaiming men from it. I had represented, in my Letters, that the salutary influence of the punishment threatened must be in proportion to the *greatness* of the evil which we apprehend to be involved in it; and upon this principle, had endeavoured to show, that the view which the Orthodox entertain of the inexpressible greatness and endless duration of future punishment must have the most powerful tendency to deter men from the commission of sin. The argument which Dr. Ware arrays against this reasoning is, in brief, that such a punishment is obviously disproportioned to the demerit of sin, and so cannot be firmly believed; that the "terror" it excites is so "vague and indistinct, and so mingled with incredulity," as to "destroy its practical effects." But has not Dr. Ware entirely mistaken the real question in debate? When we would ascertain the influence of any particular sentiment, we do not surely look to those who disbelieve and reject it, nor to those who half-believe it. Who ever attempted to honour Christianity, by showing its happy influence upon Mahometans or infidels? When Dr. Ware speaks of the influence of the *Unitarian* doctrine, does he mean to speak of its influence upon those who reject it, or upon those who receive it? No doctrine can produce its proper effect in any other way, than by being cordially *believed*. The influence which any doctrine has, is the same thing as the influence which the *belief* of it has. Let Dr.

Ware then come to the question, and inquire, what will be the influence of our doctrine upon those who seriously believe it. Let him look into the minds of those, who have so deep an impression of the evil of sin, that endless punishment appears to be its just desert; who as certainly believe that such punishment will be inflicted on the wicked, as that endless happiness will be conferred on the righteous. And let him inquire what will be the proper effect of the doctrine, thus cordially believed.

But Dr. Ware seems to think it *impossible to believe* the doctrine of endless punishment. Doubtless he speaks of an impossibility which *Unitarians* feel; for he surely would not charge us with insincerity, when we profess to believe the doctrine. Now I admit that Unitarians may find it difficult or impossible to bring themselves to believe the doctrine of endless punishment. With the same habits of thinking on religious subjects which they have, I should find it impossible too. But there can be no doubt that this doctrine would become perfectly credible to Unitarians, if their views of the law and government of God, and the evil of sin, should be like those which the Orthodox entertain. And if they should come really to believe the doctrine, they could easily judge of its influence.

In p. 135, and elsewhere, Dr. Ware represents the *obvious* sense of any passage, as being the same with the *literal* sense; whereas in a thousand cases, the *figurative* sense is the *obvious* one.

Dr. Ware speaks of the "little success, which has attended all endeavours in modern times to extend the bounds of Christianity by missions for the conversion of barbarous pagan nations." If Dr. Ware could have the pleasure of being fully acquainted with all the facts which are before the public, and which have been the

subject of so much joy, and so much thanksgiving to God, I am persuaded he would adopt language very different from this. And if he had known the character of *Missionaries* as well as some of us do, he would hardly have descended to notice, except with a sharp rebuke, the disgust or the uncandid surmises of those, who are unfriendly to the cause of missions. See pp. 142, 143.

To all that Dr. Ware says, pp. 148, 149, of the happy influence of Unitarian sentiments to bring the learned, the wealthy, the refined, and those in exalted stations to be "efficient friends, and serious professors" of religion, I have only this to reply; that I should most heartily rejoice in such an influence, and wish it increased and perpetuated, could I be well satisfied, that the religion, thus promoted in the higher classes of society, is indeed the religion which the inspired pages teach, and which will bear the inspection of him, who will judge the world at his coming.

Near the close of his Letters, Dr. Ware expresses some surprise, that I should speak of the Unitarian system as "*indeed another gospel.*" But why should he be surprised? Does not every thing I have said in the controversy imply a serious conviction of this? And have not the more bold and decided Unitarians in England and America given up all thought of any compromise, and all desire of any alliance, between the two systems? And does not Dr. Ware himself, in his last sentence, plainly signify, that one and only one of these systems is to be considered as the true gospel? "Christians," he says, "will venture to judge between the rival systems, and will take the liberty to decide, each one for himself, whether the gospel, as it is held by Unitarians, or as it is held by Trinitarians and Calvinists, be the *gospel of Christ.*" Now we only ask for ourselves the liberty, which belongs to all. Unitarians judge that *their* sys-


tem is the true gospel. We adopt a conclusion directly opposite. In regard to this subject, on which we have opinions so totally diverse, it would be inconsistent with plain truth to pretend that we agree, or to do any thing implying an agreement. On other subjects we may agree, and ought to agree. Let there be no interruption of the advantages or pleasures of civil, social, or literary intercourse ; no interruption of the offices of kindness, or of the feelings of benevolence. But in regard to the great subject of controversy between us, let us revere conscience and be faithful to the truth. If Unitarians soberly declare, that they regard us as guilty of idolatry in the honour and worship we render to Christ, and that they can have no communion with us ; instead of crying out against them for bigotry, we cheerfully allow them the rights of conscience and private judgment, and, in this case, give them the credit of a manly consistency. So on our part, if we declare our serious conviction, that their system is *another Gospel*, and that it is inconsistent with our allegiance to Christ to have any fellowship with them in the peculiarities of their faith and worship ; we request them to extend to us the exercise of the same indulgence and candour, and to suffer us, without reproach, to serve God according to our own consciences.

If Dr. Ware were not very distant from the boasting, which has characterized some Unitarians, I should be disposed to animadvert upon a few passages in p. 132, where he says not only that the moral influence of the Unitarian doctrine is "far more certain, and powerful, and salutary, and purifying," than the influence of Orthodoxy, but that the virtue of Unitarians "is of a more *pure, generous, and elevated* kind," than that of their opponents. I cannot bring myself to contest this last point with Unitarians. I doubt whether I ought to bestow upon any virtue, which we are conscious of pos-

sessing, the shining honours, which Dr. Ware here seems willing to bestow upon the virtue of Unitarians. But after all, the language he *generally* uses on this subject, is humility itself, compared with the inflated encomiums, which some of his brethren have bestowed upon themselves, and upon one another. And let me add here, because I love to honour my opponent, that the severest censures he casts upon us, are, as to manner, courtesy and mildness itself, compared with the spirit and language of some, who boast of liberality and candour. Let me be excused for one more remark in this place, and that is, that I shall think I have not written or lived in vain, if I may contribute in any measure to diminish the incivility, and violence, and, I was ready to say, barbarity, with which religious controversy has too generally been carried on, and to promote a spirit of benevolence, and kindness, and forbearance among those, who differ from each other. Let it not be supposed, however, that I wish, in any measure, to promote that timid, time-serving policy, which would either conceal the truth, or treat it as though it were of little consequence. The Lord deliver every friend of Orthodoxy from this. But I would still remember the rebuke, which our blessed Saviour administered to those, who in a moment of resentment and impatience, wished for divine judgments upon some who did not favour their cause. And I would ever impress upon my memory and my heart, the admonition of the Apostle, that "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men," even opposers. And if in any thing which I have written in this controversy, I have violated this excellent precept, the Lord forgive such an offence against the spirit of love.







Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2006

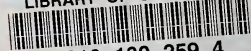
PreservationTechnologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 130 259 4